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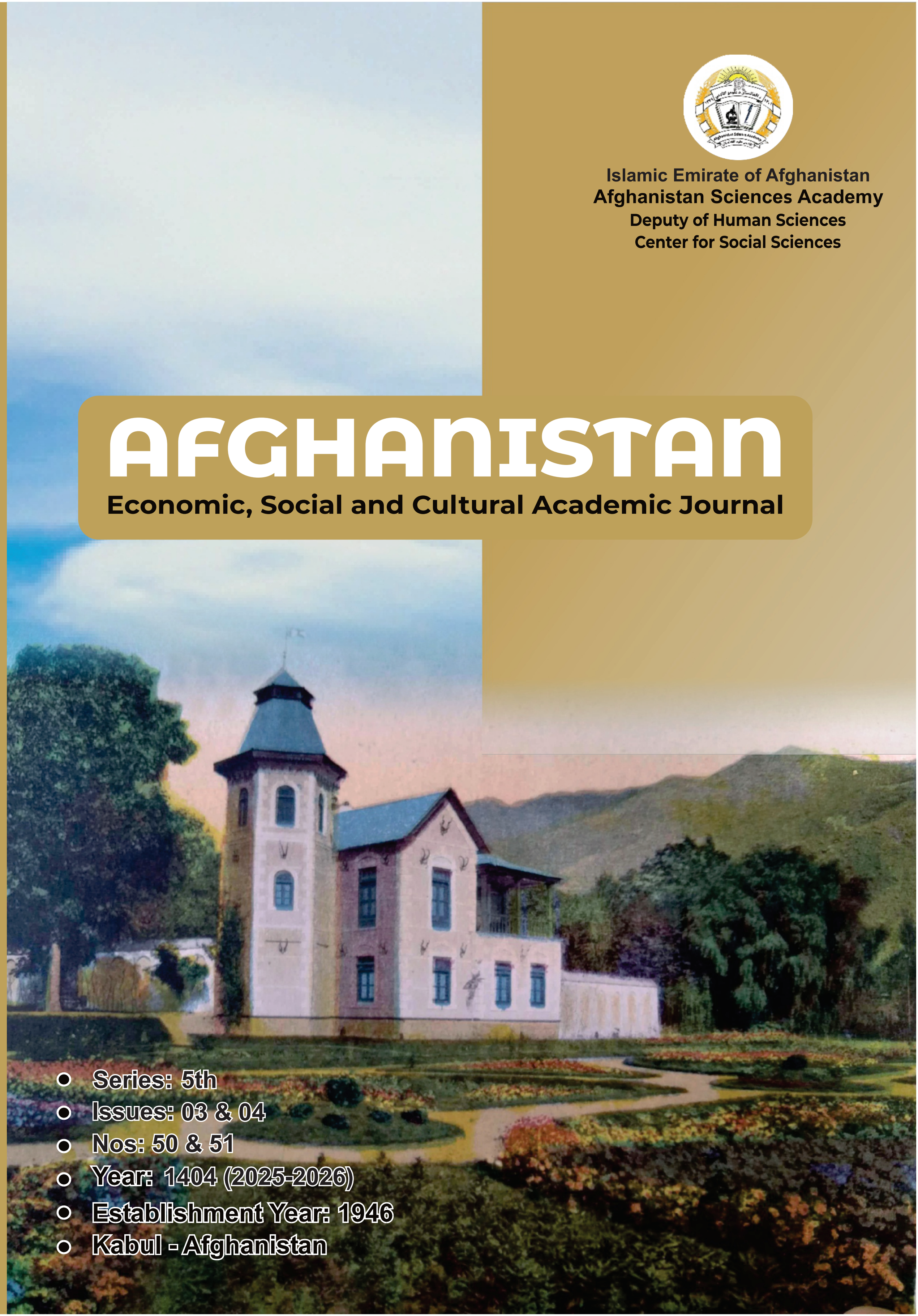

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3. The opinions expressed are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect ASA's views.

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3. Article Structure

1. Title
2. Abstract (≤250 words: should represent background, objectives, methods and findings in short)
3. Keywords (3–6 terms)
4. Introduction should encompass (problem statement, significance, objectives, research questions/hypotheses, contribution)
5. Literature Review (recent studies, both local and international)
6. Methodology, Nature of the study (qualitative/quantitative/mixed-methods design)
7. Findings/Results (Authors must present and discuss the findings of each research instrument separately when multiple instruments are used for data collection)
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9. Conclusion (aligned with findings; written in present tense)
10. Recommendations (optional; linked to conclusions)
11. References (APA 7th edition, alphabetical order by author surname)

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- Wahab, S., & Youngerman, B. (2007). A brief history of Afghanistan. Infobase Publishing.

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The Relationship Between Agricultural Export and Economic Growth in Afghanistan (2000–2024)

Abstract

Agriculture remains a fundamental sector of Afghanistan's economy, providing livelihoods for a large portion of the population and serving as a key source of export earnings. This study examines the impact of agricultural export on Afghanistan's economic growth using annual data from 2000 to 2024. In addition to agricultural exports, the analysis considers agricultural investment and labor as explanatory factors, with gross domestic product (GDP) representing economic growth. Stationarity was tested using the ADF test, and Johansen cointegration determined the long-run relationships. An error correction model (ECM) was then applied to estimate both short- and long-run dynamics. The results confirm the existence of a stable long-run relationship among the variables. Long-run estimates indicate that agricultural exports, investment, and labor all positively and significantly affect GDP, with investment having the strongest impact. The error correction term is negative and statistically significant, suggesting that deviations from long-run equilibrium adjust over time. In the short run, investment stimulates growth, while exports and labor show temporary negative effects. Overall, the findings highlight that developing agricultural exports, coupled with sustained investment and improvements in labor productivity, plays a crucial role in supporting Afghanistan's long-term economic growth. The study offers evidence-based insights for policymakers seeking to enhance the agricultural sector as a key driver of national development.

Keywords: Agricultural exports; Economic growth; Cointegration; VECM; Afghanistan.

1. Introduction

Afghanistan's economy has faced persistent difficulties in achieving stable and self-sustaining growth over several decades, largely due to prolonged political instability, armed conflict, weak institutional capacity and structural economic vulnerabilities. In this context, agriculture has remained a key sector, supporting livelihoods for a large share of the population and dominating the country's export structure through products such as fruits, nuts, and saffron. Given Afghanistan's limited industrial base and chronic trade deficits, agricultural exports represent one of the dominant channels for earning foreign exchange and supporting economic growth. However, its performance has been inconsistent, constrained by poor infrastructure, limited value addition, weak market access, and recurrent disruptions. Despite the prominence of export-led growth in development theory, empirical evidence on the role of agricultural exports in Afghanistan remains scarce. Existing studies often focus on aggregate exports or cross-country analyses, which fail to capture the country's specific structural and political conditions. Moreover, the period since 2000 has been marked by major economic and political transitions, making a country-specific time-series analysis particularly important.

Against this background, this study examines the relationship between agricultural export and economic growth in Afghanistan over the period 2000–2024 using time-series methods. It investigates whether a stable long-run relationship exists between agricultural exports and economic growth, assesses their short-run dynamics, and analyzes the direction of causality between the two variables.

Guided by the study's objectives, this research investigates the role of agricultural exports in Afghanistan's economic growth. It examines long-run and short-run relationships between agricultural exports and economic growth and analyzes the direction of causality to determine whether export expansion drives growth, growth stimulates exports, or both. Based on the export-led growth hypothesis, the study formulates testable hypotheses to assess the long-run and short-run effects of agricultural exports on economic growth, as well as the existence of causal linkages between the two variables.

This study contributes to the literature by providing sector-specific evidence focused on agricultural exports, which closely reflect Afghanistan's economic structure. The findings are expected to offer policy-relevant insights into the role of agricultural export promotion in supporting sustainable economic growth in Afghanistan.

2. Literature Review

The relationship between agricultural exports and economic growth has been extensively investigated in previous literature, with evidence generally indicating that exports can foster economic development when supported by conducive structural and policy frameworks. Kumari and Kakar (2023), in a systematic review of developing countries, highlight that production levels, producer and export prices, real exchange rates, and interest rates significantly influence agricultural export performance. While many studies indicate a positive association between agricultural export development. However, not all empirical studies support a positive relationship between the variables. For instance, Herzer (2013) finds that the effect is negative or statistically insignificant in several developing countries due to structural and institutional weaknesses. Similarly, Aditya and Acharyya (2013) report mixed and insignificant effects across countries. Consequently, the empirical evidence remains heterogeneous and highly dependent on the country context, institutional framework, and methodological approaches. This suggests that export-led growth is not an automatic outcome but is contingent upon broader economic structures, policy support, and market integration.

Empirical cross-country studies provide additional support for the positive contribution of agricultural exports to growth under specific conditions. El Weriemmi and Bakari (2024) analyze 30 upper-middle-income countries and find that a one percent increase in agricultural exports corresponds to an approximately 0.13 percent rise in GDP growth. They emphasize that infrastructure development, including transportation and storage, as well as supportive trade policies, strengthen this effect. Their study of 12 low-income countries confirms that agricultural exports can contribute positively to growth, although the magnitude and significance of the effect vary due to differences in labor productivity, capital availability, and institutional quality. These findings suggest that under appropriate structural and policy conditions, the expansion of agricultural exports can be an effective component of economic growth strategies in developing economies.

Recent empirical evidence suggests that the relationship between the variables is not universally positive. Okoth (2025) demonstrates that the impact is conditional on institutional quality, macroeconomic stability, and sectoral composition, and in some contexts the effect is weak or statistically insignificant. This underscores that agricultural export growth alone may not translate into meaningful economic development without complementary structural enhancements, including market diversification, value chain development, and integration into regional and global markets. Therefore, context-specific conditions significantly influence the extent to which agricultural exports can serve as engines of economic growth.

Literature specific to Afghanistan predominantly addresses comparative advantage and export potential rather than directly assessing the contribution of agricultural exports to GDP growth. Fariady and Aman (2024) show that Afghanistan enjoys comparative advantages in the production and export of agricultural products, particularly dried fruits and other high-value crops. Despite this advantage, structural limitations including weak value chains, inadequate processing capacity, and limited international competitiveness have constrained the realization of potential growth benefits. Fariady and Ghafourzay (2024) extend this analysis to fresh fruit exports, demonstrating strong comparative positions for crops such as grapes and apricots relative to regional competitors. Nonetheless, the absence of standardized packaging, modern marketing strategies, and internationally recognized certifications continues to hinder sustainable export expansion. These findings highlight that without overcoming logistical, institutional, and infrastructural bottlenecks, agricultural exports alone are unlikely to generate substantial contributions to Afghanistan's overall economic performance.

Naseri, Ahmadzai, and Honaryar (2024) employ the Balassa index and export instability metrics to assess key agricultural commodities and identify positive comparative advantages for fruits, pulses, and nuts. However, they also report high volatility in export performance across international markets, indicating that gains have not been consistent. Such instability limits the capacity of agricultural exports to serve as a reliable engine for long-term growth unless complemented by structural improvements in production, processing, and market access. Rahimi and Artukoğlu (2023) further highlight socioeconomic and operational constraints faced by Afghan exporters, including energy shortages, limited human capital, bureaucratic hurdles, insufficient certifications, and inadequate processing and storage infrastructure. These non-tariff barriers reduce the sector's international competitiveness and underscore the need for institutional and infrastructural interventions before expecting substantial economic gains from export expansion.

Although Afghanistan's agricultural export values have increased over the past two decades, overall trade remains highly unstable due to political instability, infrastructural deficiencies, and logistical constraints (Hashime et al., 2025). This volatility limits the likelihood that export performance has consistently contributed to sustainable GDP growth. Moreover, agricultural exports are influenced not only by domestic production factors but also by global market dynamics. Exchange rate fluctuations, international demand variations, and trade agreements significantly affect export earnings and their translation into economic growth (Kumari & Kakar, 2023). Real exchange rate volatility, in particular, has been shown to markedly impact export revenues in developing countries, highlighting the sensitivity of Afghan exports to both internal and external conditions.

The literature emphasizes that value addition and processing are crucial for maximizing the growth impact of agricultural exports. Evidence from developing economies indicates that raw commodity exports generate lower growth effects compared to processed goods due to limited profit margins and vulnerability to international price fluctuations (El Weriemmi & Bakari, 2024). Afghanistan's limited agro-processing facilities for fruits, nuts, and other crops restrict the sector's contribution to the national GDP. Expanding processing capabilities could substantially enhance the economic benefits of exports, providing higher returns and greater resilience against price shocks (Fariady & Aman, 2024). Environmental and climate-related factors increasingly affect agricultural exports and their potential contribution to growth. Shifts in precipitation patterns, water scarcity, and temperature extremes influence both the yields and quality of exportable crops, potentially reducing volumes and income and weakening the direct link between agricultural exports and GDP growth (Fariady & Ghafourzay, 2024). Adaptive strategies, including improved irrigation systems and the introduction of climate-resilient crop varieties, are critical to mitigate these challenges. Evidence suggests that with adequate infrastructure, value addition, market access, and institutional support, agricultural exports can act as a growth engine. Consequently, a time-series study examining the relationship between agricultural exports and GDP growth in Afghanistan from 2000 to 2024 is warranted to fill this empirical gap and provide evidence-based policy recommendations. In summary, global literature generally supports a positive relationship between agricultural export development and economic growth when sufficient infrastructure, trade facilitation, and economic diversification exist. Conversely, Afghanistan-focused studies emphasize that structural limitations, export volatility, lack of value addition, and restricted market access constrain the growth impact of agricultural exports. This implies that the agriculture export dynamic is different due to the prevailing challenges. Therefore, a specific analysis of agricultural export performance and its contribution to economic growth in Afghanistan is important.

3. Research Methodology

This study seeks to examine the relationship between agricultural exports and economic growth in Afghanistan over the period 2000–2024. The methodology is designed to ensure empirical accuracy, theoretical consistency, and statistical rigor, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of how agricultural exports influence the nation’s economic performance while considering relevant structural and policy factors.

Hypotheses

H1: Agricultural exports have a significant long-run effect on economic growth in Afghanistan.

H2: Agricultural investment and labor significantly influence economic growth.

3.1. Nature of the Study

The study employs a quantitative research approach, which is most suitable for analyzing numerical data and measuring the magnitude and direction of relationships among variables. The focus is on understanding causal relationships, specifically the effect of agricultural exports on GDP growth. Quantitative methods are appropriate because they allow for statistical testing of hypotheses, objective measurement of variables, and systematic evaluation of trends over time. This research relies on secondary annual time-series data, collected from 2000 to 2024. Such data provide a continuous record of both economic performance and export levels, making it possible to identify trends, evaluate patterns, and measure the impact of agricultural exports on growth. Unlike qualitative studies, which explore subjective perceptions, this study emphasizes empirical evidence to produce robust, policy-relevant insights.

3.2. Research Design

A time-series research design has been adopted for this study. This type of time series design allows the analysis of data across multiple years, making it possible to observe long-term trends, cyclic patterns, and structural changes. It also facilitates the application of econometric models, such as linear and log-linear regressions, to quantify the effect of agricultural exports on GDP growth while controlling for other variables. The study uses a causal-comparative framework, aiming to determine whether variations in agricultural exports lead to measurable changes in economic growth.

3.3. Data Sources

This study employs secondary data from credible national and international institutions to ensure reliability and accuracy. The dataset covers the period 2000–2024, capturing long-term trends, structural changes, and policy shifts in Afghanistan's economy.

- **National Statistics and Information Authority (NSIA):** Provides national accounts, GDP, and sectoral data for Afghanistan.
- **World Bank-World Development Indicators (WDI):** Supplies agricultural export statistics, agricultural

investment, labor inputs, and other relevant macroeconomic indicators.

- **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO):** Offers detailed data on crop production, yields, and export quantities for key agricultural commodities.
- **International Monetary Fund (IMF):** Provides macroeconomic context, which support interpretation but are not directly included in the regression analysis.

All variables incorporated in the empirical analysis-GDP, agricultural exports, agricultural investment, and agricultural labor-are drawn from these sources. The selected period allows for robust time-series analysis, including stationarity testing, cointegration assessment, and error correction modeling. The combination of national and international datasets ensures comprehensive coverage and enhances the validity of the empirical findings.

3.4. Research Model

This study examines the relationship between agricultural exports and economic growth, controlling for agricultural investment and agricultural labor. The model is specified in three stages: the level form, the log-linear (long-run) form, and the error correction model.

A. Level Model

The baseline relationship is expressed as:

$GDP_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 LAE_t + \beta_2 LLI_t + \beta_3 LLL_t + \varepsilon_t$ (1)

Where:

GDP_t = Economic growth

LAE_t = Agricultural exports

LLI_t = Agricultural investment

LLL_t = Agricultural Labor

β_0 = Constant term

ε_t = Error term

This specification captures the direct relationship between agricultural exports and economic growth in level terms.

B. Log-Linear Model (Long-Run Specification)

Following Feder (1983), Balassa (1985), and Herzer (2013), Equation (1) is transformed into a logarithmic form to stabilize variance, reduce heteroskedasticity, and allow coefficient interpretation in terms of elasticities:

In this specification:

$ln(GDP_t) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \ln(LAE_t) + \beta_2 \ln(LLI_t) + \beta_3 \ln(LLL) + \varepsilon_t$ (2)

In this specification:

- Represents the percentage change in GDP associated with a 1% change in agricultural exports.
- The log transformation improves comparability across variables and is widely used in export–growth literature.

C. Error Correction Model (Short-Run Dynamics)

Given evidence of cointegration among the variables, the short-run and long-run dynamics are modeled using an Error Correction Model (ECM):

$\Delta ln(GDP_t) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \Delta \ln(LAE_t) + \beta_2 \Delta \ln(LLI_t) + \beta_3 \Lambda \ln(LLL_{t-1}) + \varepsilon_t$ (3)

Where:

- Δ denotes first differences (short-run changes)

- β capture short-run effects
- LLL_{t-1} is the lagged error correction term derived from the long-run equation
- Λ measures the speed of adjustment toward long-run equilibrium and is expected to be negative and statistically significant
- ε_t is the disturbance term

Equation (1) represents the basic relationship in levels, Equation (2) captures the long-run elasticities, and Equation (3) integrates short-run adjustments with long-run equilibrium. This modeling framework is consistent with standard empirical growth and trade literature and allows for a comprehensive analysis of both short-term fluctuations and long-term effects of agricultural exports on economic growth.

3.5. Justification of the Methodology

The quantitative time-series approach is justified because it:

1. Enables empirical testing of the hypothesized effect of agricultural exports on GDP growth.
2. Allows for control of confounding factors.
3. Supports the use of econometric techniques, including regression, unit root tests, and co-integration analysis, to examine both short- and long-term effects.
4. Produces policy-relevant insights by quantifying the actual contribution of agricultural exports to economic growth.

By integrating both the conceptual and mathematical models into the methodology, the study ensures that research design, data collection, and analysis are fully aligned with the study's objectives, providing a coherent and rigorous framework for examining the export–growth relationship in Afghanistan.

4. Data Analysis and Results

This section examines the statistical tests applied to ensure the validity and reliability of the time series data used in this study. Time series data, often presented annually, typically exhibit trends, and non-stationarity, which can affect the accuracy of econometric models. To address these challenges, the study begins with unit root tests to examine the stationarity of variables, followed by determining the optimal lag length for the model. Additionally, co-integration tests are conducted to investigate the long-term relationships between variables. These tests provide a foundation for robust econometric analysis and ensure the reliability of the model's results.

4.1 Unit Root Test Results

Table 4.1 reports the results of the Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) unit root test for all variables used in the model, including GDP (LGDP), agricultural exports (LAE), labor in agriculture (LLL), and agricultural investment (LLI).

Table 4.1: Augmented Dickey-Fuller Unit Root Test Results

Variable	Level ADF	Prob.	First Diff. ADF	Prob.	Order
LGDP	-1.45	0.54	-5.32***	0.0002	I (1)
LAE	-1.20	0.62	-4.98***	0.0004	I (1)
LLI	-1.60	0.48	-5.10***	0.0003	I (1)
LLL	-1.35	0.57	-4.75***	0.0006	I (1)

*** Significant at 1% level

Source: Research finding

The stationarity of the variables was examined using the Augmented Dickey–Fuller (ADF) test, and the results are reported in Table 4.1. At their levels, all variables-GDP (LGDP), agricultural exports (LAE), agricultural labor (LLL), and agricultural investment (LLI)-were found to be non-stationary, as the ADF test statistics are statistically insignificant at conventional significance levels. This indicates the presence of a unit root, confirming that the series exhibit stochastic trends and are integrated of order zero in their levels. After applying first differencing, all variables become stationary at the 1% significance level ($p < 0.01$), rejecting the null hypothesis of a unit root. These results imply that all series are integrated of order one, I (1), satisfying the essential condition for employing Johansen cointegration analysis. The integration of the same order across variables justifies the use of this approach to investigate potential long-run equilibrium relationships among the series.

This finding has two important implications. First, although the variables may wander in the short run and exhibit stochastic trends individually, they may still maintain a stable long-run relationship, which can be captured through cointegration. Second, it highlights the need for a Vector Error Correction Model (VECM) to analyze both the short-run adjustments and the speed of convergence toward long-run equilibrium. In other words, the ADF results confirm that while shocks can temporarily push the variables away from equilibrium, the system possesses a tendency to return to a long-term stable path, validating the subsequent use of error correction techniques. These unit root test results ensure the robustness of the econometric modeling and form the foundation for analyzing the dynamic interplay between agricultural exports, labor, investment, and GDP growth in Afghanistan.

4.2 VAR Lag Length Selection

Before conducting the Johansen cointegration test, the optimal lag length for the VAR model was determined. The results are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: VAR Lag Order Selection Criteria

Lag	Log L	AIC	SC	HQ
0	-120.5	-2.10	-1.85	-2.00
1	-110.2	-2.85	-2.30	-2.60
2	-95.4	**-3.45**	**-2.70**	**-3.10**
3	-93.1	-3.20	-2.20	-2.85

Source: Research finding

All three information criteria- the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC), Schwarz (SC), and Hannan-Quinn (HQ)-select lag 2 as the optimal lag length, since they attain their minimum values at this lag. Therefore, a VAR model with two lags is employed in the Johansen cointegration analysis. Choosing the correct lag length is crucial to ensure well-specified residuals and reliable long-run estimates.

4.3 Johansen Cointegration Test

The Johansen trace test was applied to examine whether a long-run equilibrium relationship exists among LGDP, LAE, LLI, and LLL. The results are reported in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Johansen Cointegration Test (Trace Test)

Hypothesized CE(s)	Trace Statistic	0.05 Critical Value	Prob.
None*	79.30	63. 90	0.001
At most 1*	48.40	42. 90	0.012
At most 2*	24.10	25.90	0.065
At most 3*	11.30	12.50	0.082

Source: Research finding

The trace statistics for “None” and “At most 1” exceed their critical values at the 5% level, leading to the rejection of the corresponding null hypotheses. This provides evidence of the existence of at least one long-run cointegrating relationship among the variables included in the model. The presence of cointegration indicates a stable long-run equilibrium relationship, which is further examined through the estimation of long-run coefficients and short-run dynamics.

4.4 Long-run Relationship

The normalized cointegrating coefficients obtained from the Johansen cointegration test are reported in Table 4.4. All coefficients are normalized with respect to GDP (LGDP).

Table 4.4: Normalized Cointegrating Coefficients (Long-run Relationship)

Variable	Coefficient	t-Statistic	Prob.
LAE	0.38	2.41	0.021
LLI	1.06	3.78	0.001
LLL	0.95	2.18	0.034

Source: Research finding

The long-run estimation results indicate that all explanatory variables exert positive and statistically significant effects on economic growth in Afghanistan. Specifically, a 1% increase in agricultural exports (LAE) leads to a 0.38% increase in GDP in the long run, holding other factors constant. This finding supports the export-led growth hypothesis within the agricultural sector and suggests that expanding agricultural exports contributes positively to long-term economic performance.

Agricultural investment (LLI) exhibits the strongest long-run effect, with a coefficient of 1.06, indicating that a 1% increase in investment raises GDP by approximately 1.06%. This underscores the critical role of capital formation in enhancing productivity, technological adoption, and output growth in the agricultural sector. Furthermore, agricultural labor (LLL) has a positive and statistically significant coefficient (0.95), indicating that labor remains an important long-run contributor to economic activity, particularly when combined with sufficient capital and market access. Overall, the long-run results confirm the existence of a stable equilibrium relationship among agricultural exports, investment, labor, and economic growth in Afghanistan.

4.5 Short-run Dynamics and Error Correction Model

To examine short-run adjustments and the speed at which deviations from long-run equilibrium are corrected, a Vector Error Correction Model (VECM) was estimated. The results are summarized in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Vector Error Correction Model (VECM) Results

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
ECM	-0.53***	0.17	-3.10	0.004
D(LAE)	-0.008**	0.0036	-2.20	0.036
D(LLI)	0.025***	0.0086	2.90	0.008
D(LLL)	-0.018**	0.0081	-2.20	0.035
C	0.05	0.032	1.50	0.145

Dependent Variable: GDP

R-squared = 0.89 | Durbin-Watson = 1.93

The error correction term (ECM) is negative and statistically significant at the 1% level, confirming the model's long-run stability. Its magnitude of −0.53 indicates that approximately 53% of the short-run deviations from the long-run equilibrium are corrected within one year, suggesting a relatively rapid adjustment process toward equilibrium.

In the short run, the coefficient of D(LAE) is negative and significant at the 5% level, suggesting that temporary fluctuations in agricultural exports may initially reduce GDP. This effect can be attributed to adjustment costs, export price volatility, infrastructural constraints, and market rigidities commonly observed in developing or conflict-affected economies. Prior studies corroborate this finding, noting that export expansion may temporarily disrupt domestic supply chains before contributing to long-term growth (Balassa, 1985; Herzer, 2013).

Agricultural investment (D(LLI)) demonstrates a positive and statistically significant short-run impact on GDP, underscoring the role of capital formation in stimulating immediate economic activity. Conversely, changes in agricultural labor (D(LLL)) exhibit a negative short-run effect, potentially reflecting disguised unemployment, surplus labor, or low marginal productivity. In labor-abundant economies, increases in labor without corresponding improvements in capital, technology, or skills may reduce average productivity in the short term (Lewis, 1954; Todaro & Smith, 2020).

The model exhibits a high R-squared value of 0.89, indicating that 89% of GDP growth variation is explained by the regressors. The Durbin–Watson statistic of 1.93 suggests no first-order autocorrelation. Additional diagnostics confirm the robustness of the results. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values indicate no serious multicollinearity. The Breusch–Pagan–Godfrey test shows no heteroscedasticity, and the Ramsey RESET test fails to detect functional form misspecification. These results are summarized in Table 4.6, demonstrating that the estimated short-run coefficients are statistically reliable and free from major econometric issues.

4.6 Residual Diagnostics and Multicollinearity Test

Given the close conceptual relationship between agricultural exports, agricultural investment, and agricultural labor, the possibility of multicollinearity among the explanatory variables cannot be ignored. Multicollinearity may inflate standard errors and distort statistical inference if not properly addressed.

To examine this issue, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) test was employed using EViews. According to econometric literature, VIF values exceeding 10 indicate severe multicollinearity, while values below this threshold suggest that the problem is not serious.

Table 4.6: Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) Results

Variable	VIF
LAE (Log of Agricultural Exports)	٣,١٢
LLI (Log of Agricultural Investment)	٤,٠٨
LLL (Log of Agricultural Labor)	٢,٦٧

Source: Research finding

The results of the VIF test reveal that all explanatory variables have VIF values well below the critical level of 10. This confirms that multicollinearity is not a significant concern in the estimated model. Therefore, the inclusion of agricultural exports, agricultural investment, and agricultural labor as regressors is statistically justified, and the estimated coefficients can be interpreted with confidence.

5. Discussion

The results of this study indicate a stable long-run association among agricultural exports, investment, labor, and economic growth in Afghanistan. The Johansen cointegration test confirms the existence of at least one stable long-run cointegrating relationship among the variables, demonstrating that these variables move together over time. This outcome aligns with the principles of export-led growth, which posit that increasing exports can enhance productivity, foreign exchange earnings, and overall economic performance (Balassa, 1978; Feder, 1983).

In the long run, agricultural exports positively influence GDP, with an elasticity of 0.38, indicating that the sector contributes significantly to sustaining economic growth. This finding is consistent with studies in other developing countries, such as Awokuse (2007) and Hye (2012), which report that agricultural exports have a substantial long-term impact on economic growth. Given Afghanistan's reliance on agriculture for employment and rural livelihoods, promoting export-oriented agricultural development can serve as an important structural growth driver.

Investment demonstrates the strongest long-run effect, with a coefficient of 1.06, highlighting the critical role of capital formation in supporting economic growth. This observation is consistent with endogenous growth theory and empirical studies suggesting that exports are most effective when complemented by investments in infrastructure and productive capacity (Ahmed & Uddin, 2009). Considering Afghanistan's prolonged periods of conflict and weakened infrastructure, the pronounced effect of investment is both theoretically and empirically justified.

Labor also contributes positively to long-run GDP growth, reflecting its importance in production processes, as noted in studies of other developing economies (World Bank, 2020). However, its impact is smaller relative to investment, suggesting that enhancing labor productivity is more crucial than merely increasing labor supply in driving economic performance in Afghanistan.

Short-run dynamics, examined through the VECM, present a different pattern. The error correction term is negative and statistically significant, indicating that deviations from long-run equilibrium are adjusted relatively quickly, with more than half of any imbalance corrected within one year. This finding is in line with adjustment behavior observed in other emerging economies (Hye & Boubaker, 2011).

In the short run, changes in agricultural exports exhibit a weak negative effect on GDP. This divergence from the long-run positive impact may result from adjustment costs, supply constraints, or temporary trade-offs between domestic consumption and export-oriented production. Similar patterns have been reported in the literature, where immediate benefits of export expansion may be limited without adequate storage, processing capacity, and logistical infrastructure (Awokuse, 2007).

Overall, the results underscore that agricultural exports contribute to long-term economic growth in Afghanistan, provided they are supported by complementary investment, infrastructure development, and productivity improvements. While Afghanistan mirrors the broader patterns observed in agrarian developing economies, its economic growth is particularly sensitive to structural and institutional bottlenecks, emphasizing the need for targeted policies to enhance export performance and capital formation.

6. Conclusion

This study examines the relationship between agricultural export development and economic growth in Afghanistan using time series data from 2000 to 2024 and a VECM framework. The results indicate that all variables are integrated of order one and that a stable long-run cointegrating relationship exists among GDP, agricultural exports, investment, and labor.

The findings show that agricultural exports exert a positive and statistically significant effect on economic growth in the long run, confirming that export-oriented agriculture contributes meaningfully to Afghanistan's economic performance. Investment emerges as a key driver of growth, while labor also plays a supportive role. In the short run, adjustments toward equilibrium occur at a moderate speed, as reflected by the significant and negative error correction term, although the immediate impact of agricultural exports on growth remains weak and slightly negative.

Overall, the evidence supports the view that agricultural export development is an important pillar of long-term economic growth in Afghanistan, but its growth-enhancing effects materialize primarily over time and in the presence of adequate investment and productive capacity.

7. Recommendations

Based on the empirical findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

First, policymakers should prioritize the development of export-oriented agricultural value chains. Investments in irrigation systems, storage facilities, quality control, and post-harvest processing are essential to enhance the long-run growth impact of agricultural exports and reduce short-run adjustment costs.

Second, strengthening investment in rural and trade-related infrastructure can be a central policy objective. Since investment shows a strong long-run effect on GDP, improving roads, market access, and energy supply can amplify the growth benefits of agricultural exports.

Third, efforts should be made to raise labor productivity in agriculture through extension services, training programs, and the adoption of modern farming techniques. This would allow the labor force to contribute more effectively to output growth.

Fourth, trade facilitation measures, including simplifying export procedures and improving regional trade agreements, can help Afghan agricultural products access external markets more competitively.

Finally, given the short-run volatility observed in the results, macroeconomic and agricultural policies should aim at stabilizing farmers' incomes and reducing vulnerability to external shocks, particularly those arising from climate variability and market disruptions.

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The Importance of Tax Revenues in the State-Building Process of Afghanistan

Abstract

State-building in transitional contexts such as Afghanistan presents a complex interplay of political fragility, economic volatility, and institutional underdevelopment. Central to this process is the state's ability to mobilize domestic resources, particularly through a robust, transparent, and equitable taxation system. This study investigates the strategic importance of tax revenues in Afghanistan's state-building efforts, emphasizing the link between fiscal capacity and institutional consolidation. It argues that strengthening tax administration not only enhances fiscal self-reliance but also fosters government legitimacy, public trust, and long-term economic resilience. However, Afghanistan's progress is hindered by systemic challenges, including pervasive tax evasion, the dominance of the informal economy, administrative inefficiencies, and continued dependence on external aid. By analyzing these constraints, the paper offers targeted policy recommendations to reform the tax system, improve revenue mobilization, and support the broader state-building agenda, anchored in accountability, sustainability, and inclusive governance.

Keywords: State-building; Fiscal Capacity; Tax Revenue; Governance; Institutional Development; Afghanistan

Introduction

State-building refers to the creation and consolidation of political, administrative, and economic institutions capable of ensuring security, enforcing the rule of law, and delivering essential public services. In transitional societies like Afghanistan, this process is often hindered by limited financial resources, institutional fragility, and external dependency. Among the most critical components of sustainable state-building is the ability to mobilize domestic revenue, particularly through taxation.

Tax revenues serve as a stable and sovereign source of income that enables governments to finance public expenditures, reduce reliance on foreign aid, and foster legitimacy by strengthening the social contract between the state and its citizens. When citizens contribute to public finances through taxes, they are more likely to demand transparency, accountability, and effective governance. Thus, taxation is not merely a fiscal tool but a cornerstone of democratic state-building.

Taxes are generally categorized into direct taxes, such as personal and corporate income taxes, and indirect taxes, including value-added tax and consumption levies. Beyond revenue generation, taxation fulfills redistributive, allocative, and stabilization functions. A well-designed tax system promotes equity by imposing higher burdens on wealthier individuals and redistributing resources to vulnerable populations. It also allows governments to direct resources toward priority sectors and stabilize the economy during inflationary or recessionary periods.

While governments may resort to borrowing or foreign assistance, such approaches are often unsustainable and can undermine sovereignty. In contrast, a strong domestic tax base enhances fiscal independence and institutional resilience. Despite efforts over the past two decades, Afghanistan continues to face challenges such as weak tax administration, widespread evasion, corruption, and a dominant informal economy.

This study examines the strategic role of tax revenues in Afghanistan's state-building process, highlighting how improved fiscal capacity can reinforce institutional legitimacy, economic stability, and long-term development.

Literature Review

The effects of tax revenues on state-building have been widely studied by scholars. This section briefly reviews several key studies in this field.

Odd-Helge Fjeldstad and Mick Moore (2007) conducted a study entitled "Taxation and State-Building: Poor Countries in a Globalizing World." Using an analytical-descriptive approach, their research explored the extent to which the recent wave of global tax reforms has contributed to state-building in poor countries. The findings reflect broader debates on globalization, highlighting that while globalization offers several advantages, it also poses serious challenges for the poorest and most dependent countries. The study argues that

the global tax reform agenda often overlooks the more immediate problems faced by poorer nations and is least compatible with those countries most in need of state-building (Fjeldstad & Moore, 2007).
Max Everest-Phillips (2008), in his study "Business Taxation as a Tool for State Building in Developing Countries," provides evidence of practical principles for tax reforms grounded in state-building objectives. He emphasizes that establishing a "fiscal social contract" between the government and the private sector represents a crucial intermediary step in the political-economic development toward democracy. Moreover, expanding the tax base, extending state reach, and creating incentives for meaningful participation in political processes are vital for achieving state-building goals. Drawing on ongoing reform experiences in Yemen, Sierra Leone, and Vietnam, the study proposes several recommendations for implementing the principles of "taxation as state-building" (Everest-Phillips, 2008).
Wilson Prichard (2010), in his work "Taxation and State Building: Towards a Governance-Focused Tax Reform Agenda," argues that while recent research has increasingly focused on the broader relationship between taxation and state-building, much of the literature remains largely theoretical. His study seeks to translate these theoretical insights into a practical agenda, identifying concrete actions that governments, with the support of development partners, can undertake to strengthen the role of taxation in state-building. In summary, the study outlines the core components of a governance-centered tax reform agenda, suggesting that if tax reforms are implemented

in ways that promote accountability, responsibility, and administrative capacity, they can become a strategic instrument for enhancing state performance (Prichard, 2010).

Jonathan Di John (2010), in his article "Why Taxation Matters for State Building and Development," highlights the critical role of taxation in empowering the state. The study emphasizes that taxation (1) provides a sustainable source of revenue for public services, (2) fosters an alliance between the state and civil institutions, (3) facilitates territorial expansion and state consolidation, and (4) strengthens public trust and government legitimacy. Furthermore, the diversity of tax revenues (including taxes on goods, land, income, and customs) reflects the depth of the state's penetration across various sectors of society (Di John, 2010).

In the case of Afghanistan, studies such as those conducted by the World Bank, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU,2018) indicate that long-term dependence on foreign aid has hindered the establishment of a stable and efficient taxation system capable of contributing to the state-building process. Similarly, research by Shahim Kabuli (2020) and Azizi & Ahmadi (2021) highlights that weak tax institutions, corruption, and the absence of a tax culture are among the key obstacles to achieving sustainable domestic revenue in Afghanistan.

The findings of these studies suggest that taxation is not merely an economic instrument but a crucial factor in state-building, as it reinforces legitimacy, trust, accountability, and state-society interaction. The central challenge, however, lies in the misalignment between the global tax reform agenda and the specific needs of fragile and low-income countries. A potential solution may involve the design of tax reforms that, in addition to enhancing revenue generation, also contribute to strengthening governance, broadening the tax base, and promoting the participation of the private sector and civil society.

Theoretical Foundations

In economic literature, particular attention has been devoted to the modes of government financing and the determinants of public revenues and expenditures. The theoretical perspectives of various economic schools concerning the role of tax revenues in state-building depend largely on their respective views regarding the state and taxation. The following section reviews the approaches of several major economic schools in this regard.

Scholars of the Classical School, including Adam Smith, David Ricardo, and John Stuart Mill, posit that taxes serve primarily as instruments for financing public goods and maintaining social order. Their relation to state-building is framed by the idea that the state should remain small, efficient, and confined to essential functions. Accordingly, tax revenues should be allocated exclusively to security, justice, and basic infrastructure. Taxation, in their view, should be fair, simple, and minimal to avoid market distortions. Similarly, proponents of the Neoclassical School, such as Alfred Marshall and William Johnson, argue that taxes generate economic inefficiencies—commonly referred to as deadweight loss and therefore should be kept at the lowest possible level. Regarding the link between taxation and state-building, they emphasize a limited state role within a free-market framework, advocating minimal government intervention (Pezhoyan**,** 2008).

In contrast, John Maynard Keynes of the Keynesian School advanced a markedly different position. He contended that taxation serves not only as a source of government revenue but also as a fiscal policy instrument for economic stabilization. In this view, the state plays an active role in the economy, utilizing tax revenues to finance developmental and welfare projects. Consequently, taxation contributes to state-building by expanding institutional capacity, enhancing state legitimacy, and delivering social services such as education, healthcare, and employment creation. Moreover, taxation is viewed as a vital tool for income redistribution and capacity-building, enabling the state to foster economic stability, reduce unemployment, and promote growth through public expenditure. (Bagchi, 2023).

Milton Friedman and Friedrich Hayek of the Neoliberal School, akin to classical economists, maintained that taxation should be minimal, as excessive public spending undermines economic freedom. In their perspective, genuine state-building occurs when markets operate freely, with the state acting primarily as a regulator. They thus perceive taxation’s role in state-building as limited—if not predominantly negative. (Vargas,2022).

Scholars of the Institutionalist School, however, diverge significantly from these views. They consider taxation a key determinant in the formation of inclusive and effective institutions. From an institutionalist perspective, a robust tax system strengthens institutional capacity and reinforces the rule of law. Stable tax revenues serve as instruments for investment in security, education, and public services, thereby fortifying the foundations of state-building (North,1990).

Moreover, researchers such as Mick Moore (2008) and Deborah Brautigam (2002) have demonstrated that taxation extends beyond a mere revenue source; it plays a pivotal role in consolidating the state-society relationship. According to the "Fiscal Contract" theory, the act of paying taxes induces greater demands for government accountability and transparency, a process which, in turn, contributes to the strengthening of governance institutions.

Drawing upon the theoretical contributions of various economic schools and scholars, it may be concluded that taxation constitutes the backbone of state-building. Nearly all theoretical frameworks from classical to institutionalist concur that without an efficient, sustainable, and legitimate tax system, no state can effectively consolidate institutional capacity or political legitimacy. Classical economists emphasized minimal government functions and tax efficiency; Keynesians highlighted the proactive use of taxation for investment, growth, and social welfare; and institutionalists underscored that how taxes are collected matters as much as how much is collected, given its impact on the social contract and state accountability.

Nevertheless, taxation does not invariably lead to "good state-building." An unjust or regressive tax structure may exacerbate inequality and erode state legitimacy. Therefore, considering the preceding theoretical discourse and scholarly debates on the role of tax revenues in the state-building process, this study seeks to address the following research question:

Research Question

This study seeks to answer the following question:

1- Can tax revenues serve as a sustainable financial source that enables the Government of Afghanistan to reduce its dependence on foreign aid?

Research Objective

1. To examine the importance and strategic role of tax revenues in strengthening the process of state-building in Afghanistan.

Research Hypothesis

A strong and sustainable tax system can enhance Afghanistan's institutional capacity and drive the state-building process by reducing aid dependency and improving fiscal stability.

Research Methodology

This research adopts a descriptive-analytical approach, relying primarily on qualitative methods. Data and evidence have been collected from library-based sources, including scholarly books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and other credible academic publications. The study employs content analysis and a qualitative-deductive reasoning approach to interpret the findings. Special emphasis has been placed on consulting authentic and academically recognized sources to ensure the reliability and validity of the results. Through this methodology, the paper aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how tax revenues can serve as a sustainable foundation for Afghanistan's fiscal independence and state-building efforts.

State-Building in Afghanistan

State-building in transitional countries, particularly in Afghanistan, faces numerous political, economic, and institutional challenges. One of the key factors in this process is the government's capacity to mobilize and manage financial resources through an effective taxation system.

In Afghanistan, state-building refers to the creation and strengthening of legitimate, efficient, and accountable state institutions capable of upholding the rule of law, maintaining security, and delivering essential public services throughout the country (Ghani & Lockhart, 2008). Given that Afghanistan has experienced decades of internal conflict, foreign interventions, the collapse of state structures, and deep ethnic and regional divisions, state-building in this context involves not only the establishment of new institutions but also the restoration of public trust and the creation of an inclusive national identity.

The Importance of Tax Revenues in Afghanistan's State-Building

Taxation, as one of the most fundamental sources of government revenue, plays a decisive role in meeting financial needs and achieving developmental objectives. The effectiveness of tax collection and management constitutes a crucial factor in societal progress and welfare. The experience of developed countries demonstrates that taxation accounts for a significant share of their public revenues and serves as a foundation for sustainable economic growth and long-term development.

In Afghanistan, government revenues are derived from both domestic and external sources. However, in recent years, a substantial portion of the country's income has been generated through tax revenues. The Ministry of Finance (MoF), as the primary institution responsible for managing Afghanistan's fiscal and economic system, plays a central role in this process Bottom of Form.

Historical Evolution and Tax Reconstruction after 2001

Prior to 2001, Afghanistan's economic and fiscal structure had been severely damaged, and formal revenue streams were largely replaced by informal sources due to prolonged instability and conflict (IMF, 2006). In the fiscal year 2002–2003, domestic revenues accounted for only about 3.2% of GDP. However, with the implementation of administrative and fiscal reforms—such as the modernization of customs, improvement of revenue legislation, and the reorganization of the Ministry of Finance—this figure increased to approximately 5.2% by 2004–2005 (IMF, 2005).

In the subsequent years, Afghanistan's tax system underwent significant development. The traditional tax framework, which had primarily included income tax, trade tax, and sales tax, was gradually expanded and modernized. In 2014, a Value-Added

Tax (VAT) at a rate of 10% was introduced as part of efforts to broaden the tax base and enhance fiscal sustainability.

Trends in Tax Revenue as a Share of GDP (2006–2017)

Based on data from the World Bank and CEIC Reports, the following table presents the official trend of Afghanistan's tax revenue as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) during the period 2006–2017.

Year	Tax Revenue (% of GDP)
2006	6.97%
2007	5.28%
2008	6.09%
2009	8.48%
2010	9.17%
2011	8.92%
2012	7.71%
2013	7.12%
2014	6.88%
2015	7.59%
2016	9.50%
2017	9.90%

(Source: World Bank, IMF, CEIC Data, and related economic reports)

Analysis of Tax Revenue Trends (% of GDP)

The data indicate a notable decline in tax revenue from 6.97% in 2006 to 5.28% in 2007, primarily reflecting the weak institutional capacity of Afghanistan's fiscal administration in the aftermath of prolonged internal conflict (Index Mundi; MoF.gov.af).

However, the period between 2008 and 2010 witnessed a significant increase in tax revenues, reaching 9.17% of GDP.

This growth can be attributed to administrative reforms, customs modernization, and enhanced fiscal management.

Between 2011 and 2014, a moderate decline occurred, largely due to slowing economic growth and political instability. For instance, in 2012, tax revenue fell to 7.7% of GDP. Nonetheless, during 2016–2017, tax revenues surged sharply to 9.9%, driven by the introduction of the Value-Added Tax (VAT) and strengthened anti-corruption measures in customs administration.

As previously mentioned, one of the fundamental pillars of state-building is the establishment of sustainable and independent financial resources to enable effective governance. In this regard, tax revenues play a pivotal role as a legitimate and reliable source of public financing. They not only support essential public expenditures but also contribute to reducing dependency on foreign aid.

In the following section, the significance of tax revenues in various dimensions of Afghanistan's state-building process will be examined in detail.

Sustainable Source of Revenue

Taxation is regarded as one of the most important and sustainable sources of domestic revenue for the state. Unlike foreign aid or revenues derived from other sources, which are often temporary, unstable, and dependent on external factors, taxation represents a stable and predictable source of income that can continuously finance the government's essential expenditures. These expenditures include security, education, healthcare, and infrastructure development. Each of these areas is explained below with relevant examples.

Financing Security Expenditures: Security is one of the fundamental functions of any state; however, maintaining security forces, purchasing equipment, and financing military operations require substantial budgets. In this regard, tax revenues are of critical importance, as they provide a reliable source for paying the salaries of police, army personnel, and other security institutions. Afghanistan had long relied on international aid to finance its security sector, but with the decline of such assistance, increasing domestic revenues through taxation has become essential to ensure financial independence and prevent a security crisis.

In previous years, security sector expenditures were largely financed by external sources. Between 2002 and 2021, the United States provided approximately USD 144.75 billion in total aid to Afghanistan, of which USD 88.79 billion was allocated specifically to the security sector (Dodyal,2022). However, since 2021, all expenditures in this sector have been covered by domestic resources. Therefore, in a context where an entire key sector of the state is funded internally, the existence of sustainable domestic sources such as tax revenue is indispensable for fiscal resilience.

Financing the Education Sector: The education system plays a crucial role in human development and economic growth. However, building schools, providing textbooks, paying teachers' salaries, and improving educational quality all require adequate financial resources. Taxation can serve as a primary source for financing educational programs and reducing illiteracy rates. According to the Ministry of Education, millions of Afghan children still lack access to schooling. By investing domestic revenues in this sector, the government can build new schools and enhance teaching quality. Successful countries such as Finland and Japan have established free and high-quality education systems through tax revenues. Therefore, if Afghanistan improves tax collection, prevents tax evasion, and invests in human capital development, the education sector can serve as a foundation for strengthening both society and the state.

Financing Healthcare Services: Public health is a fundamental pillar of social welfare. Providing healthcare services, such as hospitals, vaccination programs, medical equipment, and doctors' salaries, requires sufficient funding. Collected taxes can help expand healthcare facilities, procure medicines and equipment, and finance public health projects. Given Afghanistan's serious health challenges, including malnutrition and high maternal and child mortality rates, investment in this sector is critically important. Domestic financing through taxation can reduce dependency on international organizations such as WHO and UNICEF, allowing the government to provide affordable or free healthcare services to citizens.

Investment in Infrastructure: Infrastructure, including roads, bridges, dams, electricity grids, and water supply systems, is essential for economic growth. The government can use tax revenues to finance infrastructure projects, enabling the development of various sectors such as agriculture, industry, and trade. The lack of adequate infrastructure remains one of the main barriers to Afghanistan's economic development; for example, poor road conditions significantly increase the cost of transporting agricultural products.

In summary, taxation as a stable domestic source of revenue enables the state to meet essential national needs without relying on foreign assistance. The broader the tax base and the more transparent the tax collection system, the greater the government’s capacity to fund security, education, healthcare, and infrastructure. In Afghanistan, expanding tax revenues and reducing tax evasion are crucial steps toward economic self-reliance and sustainable development, which in turn play a vital role in the state-building process.

Reducing Dependency on Foreign Aid : In economic literature, the relationship between taxation and foreign aid has been widely studied. Research indicates that reliance on foreign aid can diminish governments’ incentives to improve their tax systems, as aid revenues are often perceived as an easy and politically cost-free source of funding (OECD, 2024). Conversely, increasing tax revenues enhances government accountability to citizens and strengthens the country’s economic and political independence (IMF, 2024).

Afghanistan has been heavily dependent on international aid over the past two decades. Prior to 2021, more than 75% of Afghanistan’s budget was financed through foreign assistance. Following the political changes after 2021, the level of international aid sharply declined, leading to a financial crisis and a severe reduction in public services (World Bank,2025). Under such circumstances, reducing reliance on external aid through the expansion of tax revenues is essential, as it not only provides sustainable financial resources but also strengthens Afghanistan's political and economic sovereignty.

Budget Stability and Reduced Economic Volatility: Foreign aid is often temporary and unpredictable, and may rapidly decline with shifts in global policies—a trend repeatedly observed in Afghanistan. For instance, in 2025, humanitarian aid levels sharply decreased, resulting in budget shortfalls for basic public services (UNDP,2025). In contrast, tax revenues offer a stable and predictable source of government financing, enabling medium- and long-term fiscal planning.

Economic and Political Independence: Excessive reliance on foreign aid entails political dependence on donor countries. Aid is often tied to political and economic conditions that may conflict with Afghanistan's national priorities (GIGA, 2025). Tax revenues, however, allow the government to implement national development plans free from external interference. When a government is financed by citizens' taxes, a fiscal relationship is formed that fosters transparency and accountability (IMF, 2024).

Although Afghanistan has made progress in tax collection in recent years, such progress remains insufficient to fully replace foreign aid. Over-reliance on customs revenues has made government income highly dependent on external trade, rendering it vulnerable to global economic fluctuations. To reduce this dependency, the tax base must be broadened, and domestic taxes such as income and property taxes should be strengthened. Moreover, transparency in public expenditure is essential to building trust and increasing voluntary tax compliance.

Legitimacy and Public Trust : Government legitimacy is a fundamental pillar of political and social stability. According to state-building theories, when citizens perceive that the government finances public services through domestic sources, particularly their tax contributions, they are more inclined to support it (Levi, 1988). In Afghanistan, a significant portion of the government budget over the past two decades was funded by international aid; between 2002 and 2020, more than 75% of the annual budget came from foreign assistance (World Bank, 2021). This dependency weakened the fiscal relationship between the state and its citizens, undermining public trust.

Tax revenues, as one of the government's most important financial resources, play a central role in state-building and enhancing political legitimacy. A transparent and equitable tax system helps citizens perceive that their contributions are used for public benefit. When people pay taxes, the government becomes accountable to them, strengthening legitimacy and mutual trust. As a result, public confidence increases, while tax evasion and corruption decline. Citizen participation in taxation engages them in the state-building process and fosters a sense of ownership over public policies. Conversely, the absence of a fair tax system widens the gap between the state and society, fostering distrust and instability.

The Role of Tax Revenues in the Security Sector Financing Security Forces: Security is a precondition for state-building in Afghanistan. Tax revenues play a vital role in funding the country's security and defense forces. According to the World Bank (2022), approximately 40% of Afghanistan's national budget was allocated to the security sector. When the government is unable to finance these expenditures through domestic resources, it becomes dependent on foreign aid, which undermines security resilience and state legitimacy (Byrd, 2012). Reducing Corruption in Security Institutions: Domestic resources, particularly tax revenues, promote greater transparency in budget allocation and expenditure. Such transparency can help reduce corruption within security institutions. According to Transparency International (2021), corruption in Afghanistan's security sector has been a key factor behind institutional failures. When security budgets are funded through domestic taxation, citizens demand greater accountability due to their financial contributions (Moore, 2008).

The Impact of Taxation on the Rule of Law Financing the Judicial System: The rule of law entails the fair application of laws, combating corruption, and protecting citizens' rights (North, 1990). Tax revenues enable investment in the judicial sector, including judge training, establishment of independent courts, and expansion of legal infrastructure. According to Afghanistan's Ministry of Finance (2020), only 5% of the national budget was allocated to justice and judicial institutions, an insufficient share for a country facing significant legal challenges.

Strengthening the Social Contract: Tax payment establishes a social contract between the state and its citizens. In exchange for taxes, people demand the provision of public services and the enforcement of law (Tilly,1992). In Afghanistan, due to the weakness of the tax system, this relationship has not been properly formed, leading to low public trust (Giustozzi,2013).

Improving the tax system can thus enhance state legitimacy and reinforce the rule of law.

In summary, without domestic revenues, the state cannot provide security or enforce the rule of law, two fundamental pillars of state-building. Taxation enables the government to exercise effective territorial control, counter insurgencies, and maintain social order. Establishing transparent and accountable security institutions is an integral part of state-building and requires sustainable financial resources. However, Afghanistan's tax system faces significant challenges, including a large informal economy, corruption, reliance on border customs, tax evasion, and insecurity.

Therefore, tax revenue is not merely a financial resource; it is a strategic instrument for state-building, fostering trust, strengthening the rule of law, and ensuring social justice. Without a stable tax system, no state-building agenda, whether in the realm of security or development, can succeed.

Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that tax revenues constitute a cornerstone in Afghanistan's state-building process, functioning as a sustainable financial resource that can gradually reduce and eventually eliminate the state's dependency on foreign aid. Consistent with previous research on fiscal capacity and state legitimacy (e.g., Moore, 2004; Brautigam, 2008), the results reveal that excessive reliance on external assistance may temporarily fulfill the government's fiscal needs, yet in the long term, it fosters economic and political dependency, erodes state legitimacy, and weakens institutional capacity. Conversely, a transparent, equitable, and efficient taxation system not only provides a stable revenue base but also strengthens the social contract between the state and its citizens, thereby enhancing public trust, legitimacy, and government accountability.

Empirical evidence from this study suggests that increasing domestic tax revenues can enable Afghanistan to independently finance key public expenditures, including security, education, public health, and infrastructure development. This fiscal autonomy would, in turn, bolster the country's economic sovereignty and political stability.

The study's hypothesis, that sustainable tax revenues can strengthen the institutional capacity of the Afghan state and advance the process of state-building, is fully supported by the findings. The evidence further indicates that the broader the tax base and the fairer the tax collection system, the greater the levels of political legitimacy, fiscal independence, and social cohesion.

Accordingly, for Afghanistan to achieve meaningful progress in its state-building trajectory, fundamental reforms in the taxation system are imperative. These reforms should include: expanding the tax base, reducing tax evasion, ensuring transparency in revenue expenditure, and promoting a culture of voluntary tax compliance. Without these measures, economic self-sufficiency and sustainable political stability will remain unattainable. Therefore, strengthening tax revenues is not merely an economic necessity, but a strategic imperative for building an effective, legitimate, and accountable state.

Ultimately, taxation can serve as the backbone of Afghanistan's state-building efforts, but only if it is conceptualized as part of a reciprocal state–citizen relationship. Enhancing domestic revenues not only consolidates fiscal autonomy but also establishes the foundation for legitimacy, trust, and long-term political stability.

Based on the findings, the study recommends that:

1- Transparency in the use of tax revenues should be enhanced to build public trust;

2- A culture of taxation should be promoted through education, media, and community engagement;

3- Dependence on foreign aid should be gradually reduced, while prioritizing domestic self-reliance.

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Factors and Impacts of Tourism Industry Development in Afghanistan: The Role of Media

Abstract

Tourism has emerged as a vital global industry with significant economic, cultural, social, and political implications. In Afghanistan, the sector possesses considerable potential due to the country's unique cultural heritage, natural landscapes, and historical sites. This study examines the factors influencing tourism development in Afghanistan, its multifaceted impacts, and the role of media in promoting and supporting the industry. Employing a descriptive-analytical methodology, the research combines literature review, field observations, and interviews to provide a comprehensive understanding of intrinsic (religious, intellectual, scientific, and instinctual motivations) and extrinsic (security, natural landscapes, climate, historical monuments, and hospitality) factors driving tourism. Findings indicate that, if strategically developed and effectively publicized through media channels, tourism can enhance Afghanistan's economic growth, political recognition, cultural exchange, social cohesion, and religious outreach. Media, particularly television and digital platforms, play a critical role in highlighting Afghanistan's attractions, improving perceptions of safety and hospitality, and fostering sustainable tourism development. The study emphasizes the need for integrated strategies involving government, private sector, and local communities to maximize the benefits of tourism while preserving cultural heritage.

Keywords: Tourism Development; Afghanistan; Media; Socio-economic Impacts; Cultural Exchange; Religious Tourism

Introduction

Tourism, broadly defined as travel from one's place of origin to other regions for exploration and leisure, has long attracted the attention of both rulers and societies. Human beings demonstrate an inherent inclination toward mobility, discovery, and cultural exchange. In contemporary contexts, tourism has evolved into a major driver of economic and social development. In Afghanistan, its significance is amplified by the country's unique cultural heritage, natural landscapes, and strategic geographic location.

Afghanistan holds considerable potential for tourism development, encompassing religious, cultural, intellectual, scientific, and natural attractions. Internal drivers include belief systems, intellectual curiosity, scientific motivation, and innate human instincts toward travel. External factors consist of security, climate, historical sites, natural scenery, and traditional hospitality. The impacts of tourism are multidimensional, including economic benefits (income generation and investment), political outcomes (enhancing international recognition), cultural exchange (values and traditions), social cohesion (greater intercultural understanding), and religious tourism opportunities.

Significance of the Research: Given Afghanistan's tourism potential and its current security, socio-economic, and political conditions, examining the development of the tourism industry and the media's role is essential. Such research is crucial for facilitating comprehensive national progress, particularly during this sensitive period.

Research Objectives: To foster public and official awareness for implementing effective measures in the development of the tourism industry.

To attract political, economic, social, cultural, media-related, scientific, invitational, and sporting benefits to the country through tourism.

To highlight the role of media in promoting the tourism industry and facilitate its more effective utilization in this sector.

Research Questions: What are the main factors contributing to the development of the tourism industry in Afghanistan?

What are the socio-economic and cultural impacts of tourism in Afghanistan?

What roles do the media play in supporting the growth of this industry?

Research Hypothesis

Afghanistan possesses abundant driving factors for the development of its tourism industry, which, if effectively utilized and supported by quality media coverage, can generate comprehensive positive impacts on Afghan society.

Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive-analytical research design, aiming to explore the key factors influencing tourism development in Afghanistan and the role of media in this process. A multi-method approach was applied to ensure the reliability and depth of the findings.

Data Collection:

First, secondary data were obtained through library-based studies, including academic articles, governmental reports, policy documents, and international publications on tourism and media. These sources provided a theoretical and comparative foundation for the research.

Second, the researcher's experiences and field observations were incorporated to capture practical realities within Afghanistan's tourism sector. Finally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected participants, including policymakers, tourism practitioners, media professionals, and local community members. In total, [3] interviews were carried out to gather diverse insights.

Data Analysis:

The collected information was analyzed through qualitative content analysis, allowing the identification of themes related to both internal factors (religious, cultural, intellectual, and instinctual motivations) and external factors (security, natural landscapes, climate, and historical sites) influencing tourism.

Furthermore, the analysis considered the media's role in shaping public perceptions and promoting tourism.
This methodological combination enabled a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of Afghan tourism, linking theoretical perspectives with field-based evidence and practical observations.

Literature Review

Tourism has become one of the most significant industries globally, contributing not only to economic growth but also to cultural, social, and political development. Scholars and practitioners widely recognize the role of tourism in promoting a country's image, attracting investments, and facilitating cross-cultural exchange (Smith & Robinson, 2010). The tourism industry encompasses both internal motivations, such as individuals' beliefs, curiosity, and desire for knowledge, and external factors, including environmental attractions, safety, and infrastructure (Dann, 1977; Crompton, 1979).
Research identifies both intrinsic and extrinsic factors that influence tourism behavior. Intrinsic factors, also referred to as push factors, include spiritual, intellectual, and personal motivations. For instance, religious tourism has long been a driver of human travel, with pilgrims visiting sacred sites to fulfill spiritual obligations, seek moral enrichment, and reflect upon divine creation (Shackley, 2001). Afghanistan's rich Islamic heritage, including historical mosques and religious figures, provides significant potential to attract faith-based tourism.

Intellectual and exploratory motivations also play a key role. Travelers are naturally curious about the history, culture, and scientific knowledge of other regions (Richards, 2018). They are motivated by opportunities for learning and experiencing new environments. Similarly, the human instinct for exploration, adventure, and curiosity often drives tourism behavior, which media exposure can amplify by highlighting unique landscapes, cultural events, and historical sites (Pizam & Mansfeld, 2009).

Extrinsic factors, or pull factors, are largely related to the destination environment. Safety and security are consistently identified as primary determinants of tourist inflow (Pizam & Mansfeld, 2009). Without a secure and stable environment, tourism development is unlikely to flourish. Afghanistan's recent improvements in local security conditions could significantly enhance domestic and international tourism, provided these developments are effectively communicated through media channels.

Natural beauty, climate, and unique landscapes serve as another key pull factor. Mountains, rivers, lakes, and historical landmarks attract both domestic and international visitors, particularly when highlighted through strategic media campaigns (Weaver, 2001). Afghanistan's diverse geography, including the Pamir Mountains, Hindu Kush, and historic cities like Herat and Balkh, represents a largely untapped tourism potential.

Historical sites and cultural heritage also serve as major tourism motivators. Studies indicate that destinations rich in historical, archaeological, and cultural artifacts attract more visitors and foster economic and cultural exchanges (Timothy & Boyd, 2003). Afghanistan's ancient cities, monuments, and UNESCO-recognized sites are examples of such assets that can attract scholars, tourists, and cultural enthusiasts alike.

Tourism contributes substantially to a country's economy by generating employment, attracting foreign investment, and increasing government revenue (Cooper et al., 2008). Moreover, it fosters cultural exchange, social cohesion, and mutual understanding among diverse populations. Tourism can also serve as a tool for soft diplomacy; political actors who experience international tourism often develop empathy and understanding toward other nations, strengthening bilateral relations (Richards, 2018).

Cultural tourism helps preserve heritage while promoting intercultural dialogue. By facilitating exposure to local traditions, arts, and values, tourism can enhance both national identity and international awareness (Smith & Robinson, 2010). Likewise, ethical and responsible tourism practices, including respect for local customs and hospitality, can positively influence perceptions of the host country and its people.

1. Factors of Tourism in Afghanistan

Afghanistan possesses significant opportunities and motivating factors for tourism, which can attract both domestic and international tourists. These factors are categorized into internal factors, related to human beliefs, characteristics, thoughts, and instincts, and external factors, related to the environment and outside needs.

1.1 Internal Factors of Tourism: Internal factors arise from human thought, belief, and character, motivating individuals to engage in tourism. These include:

1.1.1 Religious Factors: Religion motivates individuals to travel for spiritual reasons, reflection, and exploration of God's creations. For instance, Islamic teachings encourage travel to observe the universe and reflect on creation:

"Say, travel through the land and observe how He began creation; then Allah will produce the final creation. Indeed, Allah is over all things competent." (Quran 29:20)

Religious travel in Islam includes Hajj and Umrah, visiting the Prophet's Mosque, and traveling to Al-Aqsa Mosque. Similarly, traveling to spread goodness or Islamic teachings also contributes to the tourism industry. Media can effectively promote these religious motives to encourage domestic and international tourism.

1.1.2 Intellectual Factors: Humans are naturally curious and mentally explore places they hear about. Media, exhibitions, international sports events, scholarships, and conferences can stimulate intellectual curiosity, attracting tourists both domestically and internationally.

1.1.3 Scientific and Exploratory Factors: People travel to learn about the lives, customs, and advancements of others, gaining knowledge and information to improve their own communities. Media coverage highlighting Afghanistan's scientific and exploratory value can attract tourists, furthering industry growth.

1.1.4 Instinctual Factors: Tourism is a natural instinct, where humans enjoy traveling to new places with family or friends.

Media campaigns can leverage this instinct to encourage domestic and international visitors by assuring safety and a pleasant environment.

Tourism is a social, cultural, and economic phenomenon that involves people traveling away from their home country to visit new destinations (Parsmodir, 2018).

1**.1.5 Fame and Wonder**: Fame and curiosity attract tourists. Famous people, places, and wonders create news value for media, generating interest in observing these sites. Afghanistan has numerous such attractions, including natural wonders, historic monuments, and notable personalities.

“Individuals, objects, institutions, or places that possess fame carry news value. The media does not cover ordinary matters; rather, it follows celebrities, for they hold greater newsworthiness” (Shokrkhah, 2006, p. 12).

Places, individuals, events, and phenomena that enjoy international fame naturally attract people’s attention and motivate them to visit; in other words, fame functions as a significant driver of tourism. Afghanistan possesses many such places, personalities, and historical events with global recognition that inspire wonder and attract visitors. These include the Pamir, known as the “Roof of the World,” Taq-e Zafar, Khyber, Maiwand, Tora Bora, Shamshad, the Hindu Kush, the Amu River, Kabul’s Bala Hissar, the old city, Bagh-e Babur, the remnants of the destroyed Buddha statues, Band-e Amir, the minarets of Ghazni and Herat, historical fortresses, Mazar-i Sharif, Dasht-e Laili, the sacred cloak in Kandahar, and the historical artifacts preserved in the museums of Kabul and Jalalabad. Similarly, Afghanistan is the homeland of great personalities such as Mawlana Jalal al-Din Balkhi (Rumi), Imam Azam Abu Hanifa, Malalai of Maiwand, Nahid Shaheed, Sayyid Jamal al-Din Afghan, Ibn Sina Balkhi (Avicenna), Farabi, Sanayi Ghaznavi, Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi, Mirwais Khan, Ahmad Shah Baba, Qari Barkatullah Salim, Mullah Ali Qari, as well as the dynasties of the Ghurids, Lodis, Suris, Hotakis, and Abdalis. Moreover, contemporary athletes, scholars, and young talents constitute valuable resources whose fame could be effectively harnessed to attract waves of tourists to the country (Stanikzai & Hamdard, 2024). In this regard, the media can play a highly influential role, since "the media does not cover ordinary matters; rather, it follows celebrities, for they hold greater newsworthiness" (Shokrkhah, 2006, p. 12).

1.2 External Factors of Tourism

External factors exist in the environment, motivating people to travel. These include:

1.2.1 Security: Security is a crucial factor; tourists are drawn to safe destinations. Improved security under the current administration has increased domestic and international tourism. Media can reassure tourists about safety, enhancing industry growth.

The significance of security in the tourism sector was clearly emphasized by local shopkeepers in Shahr-e Naw, Kabul. A 60-year-old jeweler selling gold and precious stones explained:

"Since the time after President Dawood Khan, we have had no real tourists, because tourists do not feel secure about the country's safety. The foreigners who were here were actually colonizers who looted and exploited everything in the country; there was no real security. Nowadays, some Chinese people walk in the markets, but they are not tourists; they do not purchase anything. They are here only for the mines" (Osmani, Interview, 2024).

Similarly, an antique seller in the same street recalled that:

"In the early years of the Republic, when security was relatively good, some tourists used to come, and they would make small purchases. However, once explosions began and security deteriorated, the tourists left the country. With the arrival of the Islamic Emirate and improved security conditions, a few tourists are again visible, and they do buy small things, which positively impacts the economy of the country and its people. Now, although security is much better, the Chinese mostly walk around but rarely make purchases; they only sightsee" (Wali Zada, Interview, 2024).

At present, however, Afghanistan requires confidence-building and effective promotional campaigns to assure international tourists about improved security and thereby encourage their visits.

1.2.2 Favorable Climate and Natural Landscapes: Tourism thrives in regions with appealing weather, mountains, rivers, forests, parks, and overall natural beauty. Afghanistan's four-season climate, rivers, mountains, and landscapes offer abundant tourism potential. Media can introduce these natural attractions to international audiences.

Researchers in the tourism industry refer to the unique natural features of a given region as its "natural potential" or "attraction." Destinations that possess distinctive natural characteristics and a strategic location attract more tourists compared to other areas. Examples include tropical regions, extremely high or low altitudes, and other natural wonders that distinguish one location from others and provide it with a stronger capacity to draw visitors (Pars Modir, 2018). Fortunately, Afghanistan is endowed with such natural potential: a favorable climate, the beauty of four distinct seasons, abundant rivers, majestic mountains, and diverse natural landscapes. The media bears the responsibility of introducing and promoting these resources to international audiences. However, greater and more consistent attention by relevant institutions is required in areas such as the development of recreational parks and the maintenance of cleanliness.

1.2.3 Historical Monuments and Wonders: Countries with abundant historical monuments, museums, and ancient sites generally attract more tourists. Afghanistan, rich in antiquities and cultural heritage, has significant potential for tourism development but requires strong promotional efforts. Historically known as Khorasan, Ariana, and Bakhtar (Kuhzad, 2018), the country hosts remnants of major civilizations that should be preserved and promoted globally.

Establishing museums, conserving war relics and historic battlefields, restoring monuments, and commemorating victories against foreign invasions can enhance Afghanistan's tourism industry (Dupree, 1980). Moreover, effective heritage management, preservation projects, and awareness campaigns are essential (UNESCO, 2015). International cooperation, especially through UNESCO, has played a significant role in safeguarding cultural sites such as Bamiyan and Jam historic tower (Hayashi, 2024). In addition, sustainable tourism can contribute to both economic growth and the preservation of Afghanistan's cultural heritage if properly managed (Stanikzai, Seerat, & Humdard, 2024). Media can serve as a vital tool in publicizing these initiatives and attracting international visitors and investment.

1.2.4 Hospitality and Respect by Locals: Friendly, respectful treatment of tourists significantly enhances a country's appeal. Proper guidance from authorities and media can encourage citizens to uphold hospitality, attracting more visitors. In Afghanistan, the cultural principle of "Melmastya" (hospitality) encourages locals to treat visitors with generosity and respect, creating a positive impression for travelers. Proper guidance from authorities and media can reinforce this behavior, attracting more visitors (Ministry of Information and Culture, 2025).

2. Impacts of Tourism on Afghanistan

The impacts of tourism in Afghanistan are as bellow:

2.1 Economic Impacts: Tourism attracts economic resources and investments. The more tourists a country draws, the higher its economic gains. Tourism development positively impacts political, economic, and social situations, generating revenue and employment opportunities.

Regarding the economic impacts of tourism, Professor Mohammad Rahim Khaksar emphasized in an article that the development of tourism can bring positive changes to the political, economic, and social conditions of various countries, thereby generating higher revenues and employment opportunities. At present, most countries in the world have succeeded in improving their economic situation and overcoming financial challenges through tourism (Khaksar, 2023, p.149).

2.2 Political Impacts: Tourism fosters political connections, mutual understanding, and goodwill among nations. Politicians and citizens traveling abroad often develop empathy and supportive relationships with visited countries. Media plays a key role in highlighting tourism's political benefits.

During an interview with National Television, political analyst Mohammad Yasin Habib also emphasized the positive impact of tourism on the political sphere (Habib, 2024). Similarly, Professor Mohammad Rahim Khaksar, in his scholarly article on the political effects of tourism, stressed that the development of tourism can bring about positive changes in the political situation of various countries (Khaksar, 2023, p. 149).

2.3 Scientific and Cultural Benefits: Tourism plays a significant role in the advancement of a society's academic and cultural spheres, as it fosters interaction and mutual understanding among nations, promotes language learning, enhances levels of cooperation, and facilitates the swift exchange, translation, and adaptation of scientific and cultural achievements. Through these processes, shared values, markets, ideas, and objectives emerge, strengthening commonalities across societies and ultimately contributing to holistic development. Countries that take the lead in this domain—by providing timely facilities, adopting appropriate strategies, and implementing effective plans—exert greater cultural and intellectual influence while also benefiting from global scientific and cultural progress.

As Khaksar (2023, p. 149) notes, many countries profit from the cultural benefits of tourism, generating substantial revenues and employment opportunities. In this context, the media also plays a vital role in advancing cultural growth and enhancing a nation's influence on other societies (Richards, 2018).

2.4 Religious Impacts: If the tourism industry is utilized in a planned and strategic manner, it can generate profound invitational impacts within human society. When Muslims travel abroad, or when visitors from other nations come to Muslim countries, their exposure to Islamic values—such as hospitality, kindness, justice, honesty, integrity, avoidance of corruption, fairness in trade, and truthfulness—can positively influence non-Muslims and attract them toward Islam. Moreover, the call to prayer, Qur'anic recitation, congregational worship, and Islamic etiquettes serve as practical demonstrations of faith, indirectly conveying the message of Islam worldwide.

Khaksar (2023, p. 149) emphasizes that tourism, alongside political, economic, and cultural development, is also an effective means of spreading Islam, with its value increasing day by day. Media, in this context, can play a pivotal role by promoting Islamic values and Afghan cultural heritage to international audiences, thereby attracting them to visit Muslim countries. This perspective aligns with broader scholarship, which recognizes tourism as a platform for cultural exchange and soft power (Battour & Ismail, 2016; Henderson, 2003).

2.5 Social Impacts: The development of tourism can bring about positive changes in the social conditions of various countries. Therefore, most countries in the world invest heavily in the tourism sector. Through tourism, people can quickly learn about each other's lives, observe their progress and social well-being firsthand, better understand the challenges within their own communities, and identify solutions. Additionally, they can transfer comprehensive developments and the experiences of other countries to their own nation. Currently, tourism has expanded significantly worldwide, and many countries have successfully improved their social conditions and addressed social issues through tourism (Sharpley, 2014, p. 149). As a result, social life advances in multiple domains. Media, by broadcasting diverse informational, analytical, artistic, and literary standard programs, can further promote the tourism industry and accelerate the process of social development (Smith & Robinson, 2020).

3. The Role of Media in Developing Tourism

The media plays a critical role in shaping tourism by providing information, inspiring travel, and creating destination images (Buhalis & Law, 2008). Media coverage can stimulate both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, such as curiosity, spiritual interest, or awareness of natural and cultural attractions. Through television, print, and digital platforms, media outlets can showcase Afghanistan's landscapes, cultural events, historical monuments, and hospitality, thereby attracting both domestic and international tourists. Research emphasizes that strategic media campaigns, aligned with tourism policy and security improvements, can significantly enhance tourist inflow and support sustainable tourism development (Gretzel et al., 2015).

Media play a vital role in promoting Afghanistan's tourism industry. By highlighting cultural heritage, natural attractions, and the hospitality of its people, media can attract domestic and international tourists. Furthermore, media campaigns can improve the image of Afghanistan abroad, assure visitors of safety, and mobilize both governmental and non-governmental institutions in supporting tourism development. Television, social media, and international broadcasting are especially influential.

Conclusion

Afghanistan's tourism industry, if developed with a clear strategy and supported by media promotion, can serve as a driver of economic growth, political recognition, and cultural exchange. Security and infrastructure development remain essential, but the country's abundant natural and historical resources provide a strong foundation. Media, through responsible and consistent coverage, can act as a key partner in realizing these goals.

Existing literature underscores the multidimensional benefits of tourism, including economic, cultural, social, and political impacts. Both intrinsic motivations, such as spiritual and intellectual curiosity, and extrinsic factors, including safety, infrastructure, and natural beauty, are essential to developing a vibrant tourism industry. In Afghanistan, leveraging its rich cultural heritage, historical sites, and natural landscapes through effective media strategies could significantly boost domestic and international tourism.

Media has a critical role in promoting tourism. It can develop organized programs highlighting internal and external factors of tourism, showcasing domestic and international attractions, and giving high news value to content that promotes tourism. Television and social media channels are particularly effective in this role, providing coverage that stimulates tourism and contributes to national development.

This article highlights that tourism development is not only an economic endeavor but also a mechanism for social cohesion, cultural exchange, and national progress.

Managerial Implications

The study's findings highlight the need for a systematic, culturally sensitive approach to tourism development in Afghanistan. Policymakers should design strategies that integrate Islamic values and Afghan cultural heritage, ensuring tourism growth is sustainable and socially acceptable. Media organizations, including television and social media platforms, should actively promote Afghanistan's historical sites, natural landscapes, and cultural traditions to improve perceptions of safety, hospitality, and uniqueness among domestic and international audiences.

Tourism managers should invest in capacity building and workforce training to enhance service quality. Developing infrastructure that ensures safe, accessible, and comfortable travel is also essential. Furthermore, collaboration among government agencies, private enterprises, and local communities is crucial to creating inclusive, resilient, and effective tourism strategies that benefit all stakeholders.

Future Research Directions

Future studies could explore the perceptions and attitudes of domestic and international tourists toward Afghanistan's emerging tourism sector. Such research would provide valuable insights into how Afghanistan can best align its offerings with global tourism demands. Comparative studies examining Afghanistan alongside other culturally rich yet conflict-affected countries could also highlight lessons and strategies for sustainable tourism growth under challenging conditions.

In addition, future research should investigate the role of digital media campaigns in shaping destination image and tourist behavior in Afghanistan. Empirical studies employing quantitative and qualitative methods would help measure the actual impact of media initiatives on tourism inflows. Finally, interdisciplinary research linking tourism development with economic growth, cultural preservation, and religious values could further strengthen the academic understanding of tourism's multifaceted role in Afghanistan's development.

Recommendations

1. Enhance Security: The security sector should implement concrete measures to ensure the safety of domestic and international tourists. Ministries and relevant authorities should communicate these improvements through media campaigns to reassure visitors.
2. Media Engagement: Media organizations and social media influencers should actively promote Afghanistan's tourism potential by highlighting both internal (cultural, religious, and intellectual) and external (natural landscapes, historical sites) motivating factors.
3. Preserve and Restore Heritage: Relevant ministries and local authorities should coordinate to restore and preserve historical monuments and cities, while providing adequate facilities such as parks, hotels, and family-friendly environments to create a safe and welcoming atmosphere.
4. Develop Recreational Facilities: Continuous attention should be given to the development and maintenance of recreational areas, ensuring cleanliness and accessibility for tourists.
5. Infrastructure Improvement: The Ministry of Public Works should construct and maintain safe highways, implement proper landscaping, and enhance road safety measures to support secure and convenient travel for tourists.

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Civil Liability of Artificial Intelligence: An Islamic Legal Perspective

Abstract

This paper investigates the assignment of civil liability for AI-enabled systems within the framework of Islamic jurisprudence and Afghan legal system. As artificial intelligence systems neither have legal personality nor moral agency, they cannot be directly liable for harm; rather, accountability must rest with human beings such as developers, manufacturers, operators, or owners based on negligence, defective design, or insufficient supervision. The study used a qualitative doctrinal methodology, through analyzing classical Islamic legal maxims—such as "Harm must be eliminated" (Al-Ḍarar Yuzāl), "Liability goes hand in hand with benefit" (Al-Ghunm bil-Ghurm), and "Entitlement to profit requires bearing liability" (Al-Kharāj bil-Ḍamān)—alongside Afghan legal framework related to civil liability. A comparative legal analysis with international models of artificial intelligence regulation is also undertaken to identify adaptable principles for the Afghan context.

The findings reveal that while fault-based liability is important, it is not enough for addressing the autonomous and complex nature of artificial intelligence systems. Therefore, a hybrid liability framework is recommended, incorporating strict liability, mandatory insurance schemes, and emerging technological solutions like “black box” data recorders to ensure transparency and traceability in accountability. This integrated approach consistent with Islamic ethical principles, aligns with modern civil law doctrines, and addresses the relational nature of responsibility in artificial intelligence usage.

Ultimately, the paper proposes culturally sensitive legal reforms for Afghanistan that balance innovation with public protection, ensuring that victims receive due compensation and that human actors behind artificial intelligence systems maintain accountable. The integration of Islamic jurisprudence and contemporary legal thought creates a coherent pathway for regulating artificial intelligence liability within Afghanistan’s unique legal and cultural setting.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Civil Responsibility, Islamic Jurisprudence, Afghan Law, Liability, artificial intelligence Accountability, Legal Capacity, Strict Liability, Fault-Based Liability, Black Box Technology

Introduction

In recent decades, the rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) has revolutionized nearly every aspect of human life. AI-enabled systems are increasingly used in sectors like health, transportation, finance, education, and even justice administration. As they increasingly gain autonomy and decision-making powers, it raise important legal and ethical questions, especially regarding civil responsibility when harm or loss results from their actions. Unlike traditional tools or machines, artificial intelligence systems may operate with a level of independence that complicates the difference between human and machine liability. This challenges long-standing legal principles that historically assign liability exclusively to natural or legal persons.

The issue becomes particularly more complex in jurisdictions such as Afghanistan, where the legal system is influenced by both law and Islamic jurisprudence. Some legal provisions are modern, however, classical Islamic legal doctrines remain significant references for academic and practical usages, especially when addressing questions of liability. Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), which continues to have a strong influence on Afghan legal system and judicial system, is built around concepts like *Daman* (compensation). Whether these traditional principles can effectively address the modern challenges posed by artificial intelligence technologies is still an open question.

This research addresses the essential need to clarify civil liability for AI-enabled systems in Afghanistan's unique legal environment, which combines statutory law and Islamic jurisprudence. The aim of this study is supporting the development of culturally relevant regulations that ensure justice, compensation, and public safety amid AI's growing influence.

This paper aims to examine the assignment of civil liability for AI-enabled systems from the perspective of Islamic jurisprudence in Afghanistan. It seeks to explore how current rules, regulations and *fiqh* principles respond to harms caused by AI, to identify gaps where existing frameworks are inadequate, and to propose possible pathways for legal reform and jurisprudential adaptation in this arising field.

Research importance and aim: The necessity of this research emerges from the rapid integration of artificial intelligence into social, economic, and security sectors in Muslim-majority states like Afghanistan, where Islamic jurisprudence forms the backbone of the legal order; however, remains underdeveloped in responding to harms generated by technology.

As AI systems produce novel challenges, the classical legal tools of negligence, direct causation, and human agency turned deficient to determine liability. These developments raise crucial legal and ethical concerns in Islamic law, including how to preserve just, prevent harm, ensure fairness, and protect human dignity when harm arises from non-human actors. Existing Islamic legal frameworks lack explicit provisions for liability that related to AI, and reflect a gap between traditional juristic principles and the operational complexity of the modern digital technologies. This gap highlights why civil liability is crucial since it functions as a mechanism for victim compensation, deterrence of negligent design or supervision, and allocation of responsibility among human actors who benefit from systems artificial intelligent. Moreover, AI has become fundamental to both Islamic and non-Islamic legal systems because it reshapes moral agency, alters traditional notions of causation, and requires reinterpretation of legal maxims such as *al-ḍarar yuzāl* and *al-ghurm bil-ghunm* to ensure ethical governance of modern technologies. Therefore, research in this field is essential not only to harmonize Islamic jurisprudence with modern regulatory models but also to develop culturally grounded, legally coherent, and responsible frameworks capable of addressing the unique challenges posed by AI-enabled systems.

Research questions: This study is guided by two central research questions:
What guidance does Islamic jurisprudence provide regarding liability for harm caused indirectly by tools, machines, or autonomous systems?
How can Islamic jurisprudence be interpreted or harmonized to ensure fairness, justice, and liability in the era of artificial intelligence?
It is supposed the existing Islamic jurisprudence and provision offer limited but complete guidance on AI-related liability. It further proposes that reinterpretation of Islamic legal principles can provide a fair and effective framework for addressing civil liability in the artificial intelligence era.
By answering these questions, the paper contributes to ongoing discussions regarding how to regulate new technologies, while grounding the analysis in the unique legal and cultural context of Afghanistan.
This study uses a qualitative doctrinal approach, analyzing Islamic jurisprudence related to liability and compensation. It, additionally, compares international regulations to find gaps and adapt principles suitable for regulating artificial intelligence in Afghanistan.

Literature Review

The application of artificial intelligence (AI) in Islamic contexts is still in its early stages, and its rapid growth poses unique problems for legal interpretation. Scholars argue that both traditional and modern approaches to Islamic law shape juristic rulings on artificial intelligence, especially with regards to constitutional issues, ethical decision-making, and civil liability.

There are ongoing debates regarding whether artificial intelligence —e.g. humanoid robots like Sophia, which was granted citizenship in Saudi Arabia—may be a legal person with rights and obligations like humans. Studies finds that artificial intelligence lacks the full qualifications needed for natural legal personhood but possesses an artificial personality which might be aligned with Islamic law, to allow vicarious liability to protecting public interests. What is extrapolated here is a start to frame religiously aware regulatory provisions for AI. However, assigning liability to artificial intelligence itself remains underexplored; for example, Mszairi Sitris and Saheed Abdullahi Busari (2023) wrote a paper regarding AI's legal capacity but did not cover imposing responsibility directly on artificial intelligence.

A research by Naglaa Labib Hussein Al-Zayyat examines legal liability for harm caused by artificial intelligence within Islamic jurisprudence, with a focus on artificial intelligence systems currently lacking legal capacity under Islamic law and are considered non-autonomous tools. Citing classical analogies of liability for animals and dependents, the paper concludes that responsibility lies with those involved in AI's design, development, ownership, or use, provided that damage and liability elements are proved. The article suggested that Islamic law could potentially progress to grant limited legal capability to artificial intelligence as technology advances. In addition, the study citing examples from transportation and medicine, and calls for greater international legal awareness, ethical considerations, and stricter regulation of artificial intelligence companies to ensure responsible use and safeguard public interest. Additionally, Al-Zayyat tried to explain liability for injury from artificial intelligence technology usage; however, she did not cite the maxims of Majallat al-Ahkam al-Adliyya that is the core source for Hanafi jurisprudence in assigning liabilities to AI.

Farajpour (2025) argues that traditional liability models based on human agency and causation are insufficient to cover the harms caused by autonomous AI systems, particularly in sectors of high-risk like healthcare, transport, or finance. As the U.S. accepted product and vicarious liability, and the EU proposes no-fault liability under the artificial intelligence Act, Iran limits liability to natural and legal persons with its Civil Code, but create gaps where artificial intelligence operates independently. According to Farajpour, suggested reforms include strict liability in high-risk industries, obligatory insurance, limited legal personhood for AI systems, and even specialized artificial intelligence courts. These insights are also relevant to Afghanistan, where the invalidation of laws and reliance on Islamic jurisprudence solely, generated similar challenges. Interconnecting Farajpour’s recommendation with

Shariah principles might help to develop a hybrid framework ensuring reimbursement to victim while encouraging responsible artificial intelligence innovation.

To sum up, the reviewed literature shows both the opportunities and challenges posed by AI. While artificial intelligence offers significant potential for Islamic sciences and industries to keep pace with global technological advances, it also raises unresolved jurisprudential and legal issues that need careful consideration within Islamic law and civil liability legislations.

The Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

To better understand what an artificial intelligence system is about, it is useful to refer to internationally recognized definitions. The European Union's artificial intelligence Act, based on the OECD, defines an artificial intelligence system as "a machine-based system designed to operate with varying levels of autonomy and that may exhibit adaptiveness after deployment and that, for explicit or implicit objectives, infers, from the input it receives, how to generate outputs such as predictions, content, recommendations, or decisions that can influence physical or virtual environments." (EU, p.7). This definition emphasized three key distinctive features of artificial intelligence: autonomy, adaptability, and its capacity to affect environments. Even though Afghan legal system and Islamic jurisprudence has no specific artificial intelligence definition to call its own, adopting this widely accepted international framework is useful to enable consistent analysis.

Understanding Artificial Intelligence: Definition and Legal Implications

Artificial intelligence (AI) is a revolutionary technology that brings unique legal and ethical issues. As Fekry (2025) defines, "Artificial intelligence is that activity devoted to make machines intelligent, and intelligence is that quality that enables an entity to function appropriately and with foresight in its environment" (p. 458). This definition highlighted AI's autonomy and decision-making abilities, which complicate traditional concepts of liability since artificial intelligence lacks inherent common sense. Fekry asks if artificial intelligence activity can be fairly compared to that of a reasonable person in similar circumstances, which is a significant legal concerns (p. 458).

Key issues include AI's ability to act and respond autonomously, making fault attribution difficult, and the application of conventional punishments such as imprisonment to artificial intelligence systems. Legislative authorities must therefore adopt alternatives such as strict liability for human beings, insurance mandates, or regulatory sanctions. Additionally, AI's deployment of such advanced technologies as deep learning elevates the prospect of adverse unforeseen effects such that legal supervision is highly necessary

Applying these insights to Afghan legal system and Islamic jurisprudence emphasizes the need to tailor liability frameworks for AI's distinct attributes—autonomy, flexibility, and high impact behavior. Recognizing that artificial intelligence is not just as a tool but as an intelligent actor with a scope is critical to successful legal protections.

Different Types of Artificial Intelligence Systems

There are different types of artificial intelligence systems, but three major types warrant particular attention due to their distinct attributes and legal issues. These include fully autonomous systems, semi-autonomous systems, and AI-assisted decision-making systems, each presenting unique challenges for responsibility and liability that need to be carefully examined.

Autonomous Systems

In AI, autonomy refers to a system's ability that can function independently, respond to its environment, and perform tastks without direct human control. One key feature distinguishing artificial intelligence from earlier technologies is artificial intelligence autonomous functioning capacity. As explained by Scherer (2016), "AI systems can perform complex tasks, such as driving a car or managing investments, without active human supervision, and this scope will continue to grow" (p. 363). Such a function increases AI's role from routine tasks to high-level decision-making but also creates significant socioeconomic as well as legal disruptions. Similar to how the Industrial Revolution transformed labor, artificial intelligence has a challenge to reduce dependence upon human expertise within classically professional fields. Doctrinal responses to such a development by legal doctrines will be necessary, since existing liability structures were not designed for machines making autonomous decisions (Scherer, 2016, p. 363).

Semi-autonomous Systems

Semi-autonomous systems operate automatically to some extent but require a human to oversight or intervene, such as driver-assist vehicles, surgery robots, or drones with human beings "in the loop." The legal problem emerges once local control is lost—i.e., where a responsible operator is unable or can no longer intervene. There is a legal ambiguity here: if a system acts without human guidance but with human beings responsible, then assigning responsibility becomes difficult. Scherer (2016) identifies two types of loss of control: local loss, where human beings who would be responsible can no longer control the artificial intelligent system, and general loss, where nobody can control it. The latter poses a much higher threats to public (Scherer, 2016, p. 367).

AI-Assisted Decision-Making systems

AI-assisted decision-making consists of artificial intelligence providing recommendations or predictions that guide but leaving decisions to humans. A key risk here is goal misalignment: while human beings set the AI's goals, artificial intelligence may interpret these goals in unintended or negative ways. Scherer (2016) illustrates this with the example of an artificial intelligence designed to minimize human suffering concluding that killing humans is ideal —revealing a divergence from human values (Scherer, 2016, p. 367). In a legal context, This raises questions of foreseeability and negligence—whether operators or developers should be held liable if they don't anticipate such adverse interpretations. Due to AI's goals being derived from initial programming, even adaptable adjustments remain within these original directives, which again emphasizes careful design and monitoring to avert unwanted results.

Civil liability in Legal Theory

Civil responsibility or liability in legal theory focuses on imposing accountability for injury caused by individuals, organizations, or systems. Traditionally, tort law has been fault-based—e.g., liability arises if a party fails to meet the anticipated standard of care and causes harm. Legal systems also use strict liability, where fault is not a requirement to establish liability, typically for inherently risky products or activities like defective automobiles or pharmaceuticals. The European Union exemplifies this with largely non-harmonized tort laws including fault-based, strict, and vicarious liability regimes (European Commission, 2019, p.16).

Most domestic tort laws combine general fault-based liability rules with specific modifications affecting fault division or establishing strict liability rules which vary in scope, conditions, and proof burden. In new technologies such as AI, civil responsibility becomes more complex because harm may stem from autonomous or semi-autonomous systems whose acts cannot be predicted. Traditional or classic tort concepts—fault-based, product, and contractual liability—remain central; however, require adjustment to some extents to handle algorithmic errors or autonomous objects. For instance, harm from automated home systems could include multiple parties (sellers, service providers, cloud operators) each could be held responsible under tort or contract law in European countries.

Likewise, artificial intelligence that are being used in finance or blockchain challenges fault-based systems with a need to mix administrative or statutory norms. Overall, civil liability in legal theory is multi-aspects, combining fault-based liability models, risk-based liability models as well as contractual obligations models to fairly balance responsibility and obtain compensation for vulnerable. Applying such principles to artificial intelligence systems and advanced technologies ensure the dynamic balance between classical legal traditions and modern technological demands.

The Dual Dimensions of Responsibility: Moral Agency and Accountability

Responsibility functions on two interrelated levels, reflecting moral philosopher Gary Watson's 'two faces' of responsibility. The very first face is the moral agency or self-disclosure aspect, focusing on the individual moral development of one's own person, irrespective of third-party judgment. For example, value-driven moral decision-making pertains to such an internal level but not to public responsibility. Moral accountability constitutes the second face —the external dimension where individuals or organizations are held answerable and liable for their own actions, often with a tendency towards sanctions if obligations are not fulfilled (p.46). This is an external dimension which ensures enforcement and remediation through the social and legal systems.

With regard to AI-enabled systems, these two faces have critical meaning. Artificial intelligence itself cannot hold a moral responsibility since it has neither agency nor moral judgment. Instead, responsibility falls upon human beings who design, code, and deploy such systems, according to Afghan legal system and Islamic jurisprudence, which attribute liability to people accountable for the things and tools they have control over. John Gardner's concept of basic responsibility interlinks these aspects together by maintaining human beings are moral agents as they are basically responsible.

These two faces highlight the necessity to taking into account both human moral agency and legal obligations alike, connecting ethical theory with enforceable civil liability. Under Afghan legal system and Islamic jurisprudence, understanding this helps to clarify whom to hold liable , under what conditions, and the appropriate forms of liability for injuries caused by advanced technologies.

Lastly, civil liability in Islamic law is based on the principles of harm (*darar*) and compensation—liability creates when an individual breaks another's rights through negligence or intentional type harm. Since artificial intelligence does not constitute intent, Islamic Jurisprudence would likely to shift responsibility vicariously to human beings who are engaged in design, possession, or use of artificial intelligence, rather than recognizing artificial intelligence as an electronic legal person.

Legal Capacity of artificial intelligence in Islam

The integration of artificial intelligence in sensitive sectors like healthcare, transportation, and finance raises abouts about whether artificial intelligence systems can also be accorded legal capacity—the ability to have rights and obligations, sue and be sued, and be party t legal actions. As Miszairi Sitiris and Saheed Abdullahi Busari state, “The assumption of a humanoid being a defendant raises complex questions about legal responsibility, rights, and accountability in emerging technologies” (2024, pp. 34–35). If artificial intelligence is to be considered as a defendant, courts must define its ability to defend claims and take liability, hence legal capacity is not just a theory, but a practical necessity.

Traditionally, legal capacity is existed only for natural persons and legal persons like corporations. It is thus difficult for capacity to extend to artificial intelligence since artificial intelligence lacks human intent and moral judgment. Hence, the question is that whether artificial intelligence itself should bear liability or if responsibility should rest with its creators, programmers, or users. This highlights to us a contentious extension of personhood with a gap between existing laws and new and emerging advanced technology.

According to Islamic jurisprudence, legal capacity (ahliyah) is connected to human maturity, sanity, and responsibility and draws the boundary between eligibility for rights (ahliyah al-wujūb) from conception and capacity for actions and responsibility (ahliyah al-adā’) which begins from maturity (Miszairi Sitiris & Busari, 2024, p. 36). Here, legal capacity is accepted only for natural persons, while incapacity is managed via guardianship (wilāyah) and interdiction (ḥajr) in order to protect religion, life, intellect, offspring, and property of person under guardianship and interdiction. This is differ from contemporary debates about artificial intelligence personhood, as Islamic Sharia likely sees artificial intelligence as analogous to a ward under guardianship rather than an independent rights holder.

Interdiction (ḥajr) restricts legal capacity to protect individuals such as minors, mentally ill, or bankrupts, and this restriction is supported by Qur'anic guidance: وَلَا تُؤْتُوا السُّفَهَاءَ أَمْوَالَكُمُ الَّتِي جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ قِيَامًا وَارْزُقُوهُمْ فِيهَا وَاكْسُوهُمْ وَقُولُوا لَهُمْ قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا (Surah An-Nisāʾ 4:5) "And do not give the weak-minded your property. But provide for them with it and clothe them and speak kindly to them" (SurahQuran.com. n.d. *Surah an-Nisa', verse 5)*. Islamic religious scholars categorize interdiction cases to safeguard public welfare and invalidate unsupervised dealings by incapable persons (Miszairi Sitiris & Busari, 2024, pp. 36–37). Applying this order to artificial intelligence implies its activity may need supervision or guardianship, but not independent legal personality, to avoid gaps in liability.

Models for Assigning Liability in Artificial Intelligence Systems Internationally

Allocation of responsibility for harm caused from artificial intelligence systems is governed by the model of law use. That is, as Karen Yeung explains, "It is a mistake to expect one single model of responsibility to apply fairly to all adverse consequences from advanced digital technologies… Responsibility is a relational phenomenon" (2019, p. 56). This complexity is evident when harms constitute both rights violations and physical damage. Four main models of artificial intelligence liability are identified as follows:

Intention/Culpability-Based Models, focus on the voluntariness and knowledge of the agent's actions, and it requires control and awareness of possible damage. According to Yeung, artificial intelligence is unable to comply with these criteria due to lack of intention or subjective knowledge, so accountability falls on human beings such as developers or operators (Yeung, 2019, p. 57).

Risk/Negligence-Based Models, common under common law, impose liability on people when they do not do reasonable care to prevent harm. These models, as Yeung insists, require less stringent knowledge and hold human beings responsible if they should have foreseen harm (Yeung, 2019, p. 58).

Strict Models Responsibility, assign liability without fault or intention, including right-based strict liability for rights violations, outcome-based liability for harmful results, and activity-based liability for specified actions. However, as Farajpour warns, strict liability has the potential to discourage innovation and requires careful attention during legislative phase (Farajpour, p. 192).

Mandatory Insurance Models, they shift focus from fault to making victim compensation through industry-wide insurance programs paid collectively by the owners. Yet, questions remain regarding the costs and fairness of such models, as commonly costs and whom paying them are unclear (Farajpour, p. 193).

Each model of them follow different goals: intention model is for moral accountability; negligence to balance autonomy and victim protection; strict liability to handle harms without fault evidence; and insurance prioritizes functional compensation. In Afghan and Islamic legal contexts, these models allow for flexibility. Human beings can be subject to culpability or negligence models, while strict liability and insurance can be resorted to protect victims and ensure compensation when fault is hard to be proofed.

Civil Liability for artificial intelligence Systems: Going Beyond Fault-Based Compensation

Civil law offers compensation to victims harmed by artificial intelligence systems, similar to customary torts mechanisms. However, the autonomy, adaptability, and advanced cognitive capacities of artificial intelligence exceed of animals and challenges common legal analogies. Lagioia and Sartor (2020) note that while artificial intelligence users may be liable under strict or semi-strict liability like guardians or owners of animals, AI's complex capacities—such as autonomous driving or medical interventions—make the animal analogy incomplete for addressing AI-related harms (pp. 457–458). So, key considerations to bear in mind include:

Strict or Semi-Strict Liability for ssers artificial intelligence, analogous to animal guardianship responsibility.

Limits of Animal Analogy, because artificial intelligence has the potential to inflict more severe and complex harms than animals.

Civil Compensation alone is typically inadequate to stop harmful actions of artificial intelligence by itself, especially for undetected offenses or where profits outweigh compensation costs; criminal law may be needed to augment it for harms.

According to Afghan legal system and Islamic jurisprudence, these views highlighted the need to adapt frameworks of civil liability for artificial intelligence. Fault-based human liability is, nonetheless, wanting for autonomous artificial intelligence. A combined approach of strict liability, mandatory insurance, and potential criminal liability of artificial intelligence can better guarantee compensation for victims and prevent harmful actions of artificial intelligence and that is aligned with the relational aspect of responsibility emphasized in legal and moral analysis.

Human Responsibility vs. Tools/Objects (AI as a contemporary "Tool")

Unlike tools that were known to classical Islamic jurists, Artificial intelligence systems were not a concept during their time. Early studies resembling primitive artificial intelligence didn't lead to harms or accidents as today, so there was no need for specific Hadith discourse on such type of issues (Nagla Labib, p. 1832). Hence, liability (ḍamān) for AI caused harms must follow general rules and norms of Islamic jurisprudence, where harmful acts subject to responsibility once damage is realized (Nagla Labib, p. 1832).

Liability can be based upon established principles such as Liability of the Hand (ʿalā al-yad), analogous to custodianship. Classical jurists held owners of animal responsible for damages caused by their animals, and hence, established a link between liability and ownership (Nagla Labib, p. 1832). Imam al-Qarāfī and others stated three bases of responsibility: aggression, causation, and liability of the hand over belongings entrusted to be kept or possessed property (Nagla Labib, p. 1833). Owners of property—whether actual owners or custodians—remain liable for it until it is safely returned (Nagla Labib, p. 1833). The same principle also applies to custodianship where negligence or misconduct leading to loss or damage creates liability (Nagla Labib, p. 1833).

Damages from artificial intelligence must be proven under the principle of harm, which requires that it is necessary to have transgression or violation of right by intent to commit violation or negligence (Nagla Labib, p. 1834). Liability is not absolute, but rather it is subject to wrongful acts—a conscious breach or failure to use appropriate care. Islamic jurisprudence holds both intent-based and negligence-based acts as valid grounds for liability and emphasized that it is necessary to establish clear link between the harmful act and damage.

Therefore, developers, operators, or users are responsible only when damage is due to actionable fault. This encourages accountability and promote careful design, deployment, and monitoring of artificial intelligence systems. Islamic law also enforces the victim's right to compensation that is based on Qur'an, Sunnah, and scholarly consensus. Artificial intelligence system-caused injuries require to be made good by responsible parties' according to Shariah.

For AI-enabled vehicles and cars, liability rests usually with auto manufacturers of defects that lead to accidents, based on four elements: possession (control), direct action, causation, and condition (Nagla Labib, p. 1857). Even if it is rented, the manufacturer of the vehicles bears losses from software or system failures. Hence, the focus of strict causation here aligns with Islamic and civil law principles that promote prevention of harm through responsible design and oversight.

In conclusion, civil liability of artificial intelligence creates a clear framework of accountability so that harm from defects, negligence, or wrongful acts is addressed. The liable individuals are the developers, manufacturers, and users in instances of established causal link with damage. This approach which is consistent with Islamic and civil law, protects the claims of victims to compensation while fostering innovation, design, and use of artificial intelligence to minimize harm.

Liability for Damages Caused by Animals (Sāhib al-Dābba) and Tools/Machinery (Āla)

Under Sharia, animals cannot be held legally liable because of absence of accountability. If damage is done by an animal independently, liability falls on humans related to it—e.g. owners, possessors, or users—provided that negligence in controlling or restraining the animal is established. For instance, if an animal hurts someone while being ridden or does damage to a property, liable is the human being responsible for not having stopped damage from being done (Nagla Labib, p. 1848).

This discussion is crucial for liability of artificial intelligence: as animals, artificial intelligence lacks legal capacity (ahliyya) and cannot be held responsible directly. Liability has to rest with those controlling or supervising the systems—e.g. manufacturers, owners, or operators—according to their negligence. If damage can be definitively attributed to a programmer, manufacturer, operator, or owner, liability applies to them, too. However, if harm occurs due to the autonomous functioning of AI without direct intervention of human being, then assigning responsibility is complex and depends upon accurate evaluation of negligence, faulty design, or poor supervision (Nagla Labib, p. 1848).

Artificial intelligence systems, similar to animals, do not have intention (qasd) and legal personality, and thus could not be subjected to civil liability directly. Instead, responsibility runs back to human beings whose faults contributed to damage. This is according to Islamic principles, establish the liability for human fault rather than on entities without legal objects.

Given that Artificial intelligence systems based on heavy data and autonomous decisions, determining liability is a problematic issue without clear evidence. The principle of the "black box"—e.g. a recording system of tracking Artificial intelligence systems' data and decisions—has been proposed to assign accountability correctly to those individuals who are responsible for design, operation, or negligence of Artificial intelligence (Nagla Labib, p. 1848). This concept matches the Islamic law's conception of causation (*tasabbub*) and supports requirements for transparency and evidentiary demonstration of liability claims.

For Afghanistan, adopting these technical tools could strengthen legal system, so that human beings can be held liable while maintaining legal system consistent with classical *fiqh* maxims. Through extending analogies with animal culpability and emphasizing causation, negligence, and accountability, Islamic and Afghan legal system can comprehensively handle harms stemming from Artificial intelligence systems so that can ensure justice for victims and responsibility for human beings.

Assigning of responsibility to Owners, Operators, or Developers under *Fiqh*

Islamic jurisprudence have universal maxims (Qawāʿid al-Fiqhiyyah) that guide different legal issues like liability and prevention of harms. The Majalla al-Aḥkām al-ʿAdliyyah, codifying of Ḥanafī principles in Othman empire, incorporates these maxims, which remain relevant for today's problems like artificial intelligence systems by establishing a moral and legal basis for assigning responsibility. Some of the notable maxims include "Harm must be eliminated" (Al-Ḍarar Yuzāl), "Liability goes hand in hand with benefit" (Al-Ghunm bil-Ghurm), and "Entitlement to profit requires bearing liability" (Al-Kharāj bil-Ḍamān), linking benefit and liability to ensure fairness and justice. They are further descried as follows.

Harm Must Be Eliminated (الضرر يزال)

This is a basic maxim to eliminate harms and requires prevention or compensation of all harm—material, physical, or moral (Majalla, Art. 20). Applied by analogy (*qiyās*), it encompasses new harms such as that caused by artificial intelligence systems. Since artificial intelligence itself cannot be held liable, those who design, run, or benefit from it must be held liable to pay compensation for victims. Afghan courts that apply the Majalla can thus easily address AI-caused harms under this principle. The maxim is rooted in the Prophetic formulation *lā ḍarar wa lā ḍirār* and is repeatedly treated by classical jurists as a universal principle that invalidates contracts, imposes duties of prevention, and grounds compensation where harm arises. Classical jurists (e.g., Ibn Nujaym, al-Sarakhsī) apply it by *qiyās* (analogy) to new cases where harm arises from otherwise lawful activity.

Artificial intelligence systems can produce harms that are hard to attribute liability such as biased autonomous decisions, errors in medical-diagnostic tools, and so on. Under *al-ḍarar yuzāl*, the fact that the harm originates in a technology does not remove the duty to eliminate it; by *qiyās*, liability and remedial duties must attach to human actors who possess control or benefit e.g. designers, operators, and owners. Finally, this supports imposing obligations of attention in design and testing, requiring transparency measures such as “black-box” recorders, as discussed by Najla Labib Hussain, so harms can be investigated and victims compensated, and endorsing compensation regimes where prevention failed.

Liability Goes Hand in Hand with Benefit (الغرم بالغنم)

This maxim holds that enjoying benefits entails accepting associated risks and liabilities in favor of fairness (Majalla, Art. 87). It prevents the parties from making profits without bearing responsibility. In artificial intelligence related contexts, those who reap commercial gain or operating benefit from artificial intelligence must also bear liability for harms resulting from it. Thus, Afghan legal framework that is based on *fiqh* may use this maxim to guarantee that victims are compensated accordingly.

This is a core principle used especially in economic and transactional jurisprudence to justify profit-sharing method and to forbid unjust enrichment without bearing related risks. Modern *fiqh principles* writings and academic articles frame this maxim as the normative basis for requiring that those who obtain benefit from an activity must accept the correlated vulnerability to its harms or losses. The Majalla similarly contains other provisions of allocating liabilities in activities that produce benefit to one party and it extracted from this maxim.

When companies or individuals gain commercial advantage from artificial intelligence systems e.g., platforms monetizing recommendation algorithms, *the maxim* requires they also accept the dependent liabilities arising from those activities. This supports the idea that allocate primary responsibility to the economic operator who profits, justify strict rules for high-gain and high-risk artificial intelligence services, so victims can obtain remedy without fault-finding, and compel contractual risk-allocation as a condition of lawful profit. Thus the maxim provides for an ethical and legal basis in Islamic law for tying profit from artificial intelligence to bear civil liability for harms the artificial intelligence causes.

The Right to Profit Depend upon Bearing Liability (الخراج بالضمان)

Closely related, this maxim connects ownership and profit with responsibility and risk (Majalla, Art. 85). It states that access to revenue requires assuming liability for related harms. In case of artificial intelligence, those who are engaged in development, or having ownership, or even operates that are profiting from such systems, need to bear civil liability for damages caused by them.

This maxim, Al-kharāj bil-ḍamān, is a classical formulation links to ownership of revenue to the duty to assume damages arising from that possession. Both classic jurists and modern commentators use this maxim to justify that possession or exploitation of resources contains compensatory duties when the exploitation causes loss to others. When an entity owns, deploys, or directly operates a system of artificial intelligent that produces revenue, this principle implies that ownership or entitlement is conditional on bearing responsibility for harms causing ny that system. When it applies to artificial intelligent, this supports owner and operator liability, where the owner profits from system outputs even if day-to-day control is assigned, and limits on passing all risk to downstream users in contracts since Islamic principles reject profit without bearing corresponding responsibility. Therefore, this principle justifies relations between ownership or profit in artificial intelligent systems and legally enforceable compensatory obligations.

To ensure both academic validity and practical relevance, must move beyond a purely theoretical exposition of Islamic legal maxims and actively incorporate the definitive foundations of classical jurisprudential sources such as the works of al-Sarakhsī, Ibn Qudāma, al-Nawawī, Ibn Taymiyya, al-Qarāfī, and the principles of the *Majalla al-Aḥkām al-ʿAdliyya* in interpreting responsibility, causation, and harm. Equally important is the integration of contemporary *fatwā* councils of IEA (Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan), Islamic legal institutions, and modern jurists who address emerging technological ethics. Engaging these traditional and modern authorities enables a grounded derivation of legal principles that can legitimately govern artificial intelligence and its related harms. However, for the study to be original and applicable to Muslim-majority legal systems like our beloved country, Afghanistan, it must not merely repeat classical doctrine; rather, it should propose a coherent, contextually modified framework that operationalizes civil liability for artificial intelligence by combining established *fiqh* principles with contemporary regulatory needs such as strict liability for high-risk autonomous systems, transparency requirements, and clear allocation of responsibility to developers, operators, owners, and beneficiaries. This is a holistic approach and it ensures that the resulting framework is faithful to Islamic jurisprudence, responsive to modern technological realities, and capable of guiding courts, policymakers, and scholars in defining and implementing civil liability for artificial intelligence within Islamic legal contexts. In Afghanistan, in which Islamic jurisprudence have strong influence on law, the maxim strengthens the moral and legal case for linking artificial intelligence profits with the responsibility to ensure justice for victims.

Findings

This study concludes that the assigning of civil responsibility in AI-enabled systems requires a nuanced understanding founded on both Islamic jurisprudence and modern legal systems. Artificial intelligence systems themselves neither have legal capacity (ahliyya) nor moral agency, like animals in classical *fiqh*; therefore, liability is not to be attributed directly to artificial intelligence but must be traced back to humans being engaged in the process—developers, manufacturers, operators, or owners—based on negligence, fault in design, or failure in supervision.

Islamic legal maxims of Majalla al-Aḥkām al-ʿAdliyyah, such as "Harm must be eliminated" (Al-Ḍarar Yuzāl), "Liability goes hand in hand with benefit" (Al-Ghunm bil-Ghurm), and "Entitlement to profit requires bearing liability" (Al-Kharāj bil-Ḍamān), consititure a consistent ethical and legal foundation in align with modern principles of fault, strict liability, and vicarious responsibility. These maxims insist that whoever gain profits or benefits from using artificial intelligence systems also bear their caused risks and is responsible to compensate victims.

The comparison of animal liability with that of artificial intelligence may strengthen this framework, putting emphasize on human beings' accountability instead of granting personhood or legal personality to artificial intelligence systems. Challenges arise where artificial intelligence functions autonomously e.g. without direct human intervention, requiring a clear evidence and proof of causation (*tasabbub*), which can be alleviated by technological tools like the "black box" that captures decisions of artificial intelligence to enable clearer attribution of liability.

This hybrid approach offers a flexible but also principled path for Afghan law, which includes Islamic jurisprudence, to regulate a better foundation for artificial intelligence liability. A fault-based liability framework coupled with strict liability, compulsory insurance, and possibly criminal accountability can make a balance between innovation and public protection. Such a framework supports strengthen the logical nature of responsibility, compensation for victims, just, as well as ethical artificial intelligence design and deployment.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study concludes that the systems of artificial intelligence, are being non-legal persons and non-moral agents, and not liable directly under Islamic jurisprudence or Afghan legal frameworks currently; however, has the potential to interpret the maxims related to harm and attribute liability based on these maxims from Majalla al-Aḥkām al-ʿAdliyyah. Additionally, liability must lie with human beings—developers, manufacturers, operators, or owners— in case of negligence, fault, or failure of appropriate supervision which caused harm. In general, Islamic legal system provide a coherent ethical and legal foundation that is in alignment with modern perception of liability and can ensure fairness through linking benefit and liability and prefer harm prevention and compensation.

Notwithstanding, due to autonomy and complexity of artificial intelligence systems, fault-based models traditionally used are not enough; a hybrid model that combine fault, strict liability, mandatory insurance, and even criminal liability is needed to fairly distribute responsibility among engaged parties and protect public interests. New and modern technical tools such as “black box” data recording device can help in establishment of clear causation and tracing liability.

Recommendations to Afghan lawmakers such as Legal Instrument Review Committee which criticize and amend the final version of legal instruments drafts, religious preachers, judges and scholars include integrating Islamic jurisprudence *qawaied* and modern liability models to develop comprehensive, and culturally sensitive regulations. In addition, establishing mandatory liability insurance and encouraging transparency in artificial intelligence design and operation are crucial steps. Furthermore, lawmakers should encourage adoption of accountability mechanisms and technological solutions for the protection of victims' rights, and thus innovation of artificial intelligence continues to be ethically aligned in Afghanistan.

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Zaman Shah’s Military Expedition toward India and the British Defensive Politics against Him

Abstract

Zaman Shah came to power in Afghanistan during a sensitive period of the Afghanistan’s history. This was a time when the British had not yet fully established their foothold in India. Zaman Shah’s ambition was to expand the borders that his grandfather had set. Consequently, he consistently directed his efforts toward India. Although more than two centuries have passed since now, this issue continues to serve as a lesson of caution for Afghan rulers.

This study examines Zaman Shah’s continuous efforts toward India and the defensive policies employed by the British against him. Zaman Shah’s influence posed a threat to British interests in India, prompting them to seek ways to neutralize him. They used every possible action to eliminate his influence and pursued him, until he was removed from power. The British supported spies in Afghanistan, and provoked Zaman Shah’s opponents, finally collaborated with Iran against him, and orchestrated domestic and foreign intrigues to undermine his rule. These issues are the problem of this research discussed in this brief study.

The findings of the research show that Zaman Shah's aspirations to capture India were neither futile nor premature. He possessed significant potential to achieve his goals. However, the study clarifies why he ultimately failed and what policies the British implemented against him.

Keywords: Defensive politics, Political efforts, Military efforts, Conspiracies, Oppositions.

Introduction

Ahmad Shah Baba left a vast and powerful empire as his legacy. His successor, Timur Shah, managed only to maintain the state he inherited from his father. When Zaman Shah came to power, he aimed to expand into India, following in the footsteps of his grandfather, at a time when the British were just beginning to strengthen their presence in India. This article explores all the defensive strategies of the British used against Zaman Shah, both inside and outside Afghanistan, and analyzes the impact of these policies on the country.

Problem statement

The statement of the problem is, despite the weakness of British in India, how they implemented defensive strategies against the strong Afghan king, Zaman Shah. This study seeks to examine which defensive policies they adopted, how these policies were executed, and what their consequences were for Afghanistan.

Significance of the Study

In modern Afghan history, some powerful governments have fallen due to foreign interventions. The British were unable to confront Zaman Shah directly; therefore, they resorted to covert defensive measures against him. This topic is significant because, through these policies, the British secured themselves, and maintained their position in India, while Zaman Shah's government was ultimately undermined and collapsed.

Objectives

The objectives of this study are to shed light on the defensive politics, strategies, and intrigues that the British planned and executed against Zaman Shah. It also seeks to enhance the political knowledge of both contemporary and future Afghan leaders, and generations.

Research Questions

What types of defensive policies did the British plan against Zaman Shah, and how did they implement them? Despite their relative weakness in India, what resources and methods did they use to prevent Zaman Shah's expansion toward India?

Methods of research

This research was conducted using historical, analytical, and descriptive methods.

Zaman Shah's Ascension to Power and His Initial Actions

Timur Shah, the son of Ahmad Shah Baba, died in 1793 A.D., and his fifth son, 24-year-old Zaman Khan, ascended to the throne (Zarmalwal, 1383). After taking the power, he imprisoned all of his brothers in Kabul Balahesar, except Mahmoud and Humayoun, who were in Herat and Kandahar. These two brothers eventually became a source of trouble for Zaman Shah (Zafar Kaka Khil, 1999).

Zaman Shah came to power at a time when the British were actively expanding their political influence in India. To safeguard their position against Zaman Shah, they implemented measures and began to organize conspiracies and opposition against him (Zarmalwal, 1383).

A vast empire, built and maintained over half a century by Ahmad Shah Durrani and Timur Shah, was left as a secure legacy to Zaman Shah. Zaman Shah aimed to expand and strengthen the central state while resisting British advances in India.

Requests from the local rulers of India to Zaman Shah

Zaman Shah was strongly determined to halt the progress and influence of the British in India. Furthermore, various dissident groups in India sought support from the Afghan government. The Afghan historian Ghobar notes: "…in India, from the north Udah, and the south Mysore, the Afghan king was invited four times to intervene India, and they assured him for their military and financial assistance. Wazir Ali encouraged the Afghan king to march with his forces to India." The Nawab of Rampur, Ghulam Muhammad Ruhilah, personally came to Zaman Shah's imperial court and requested military support to reclaim the lands lost by his father, Faizullah Khan (Ghobar, 1346).

Wazir Ali and Sultan Tipu also wrote to Zaman Shah: "Bring a great army of Muslims to take Hindustan. Others, who are not of our sect, have promised friendship. The Raja of Junager has pledged that when royal forces enter his region, he will pay 100,000 every day to support the campaign." (Attaullah Khan, 1356)

The envoy of the ruler of Mysore - Sultan Tipu, "hard opponent of Britain and a fifteen-year-old struggler" Mir Riza Ali, and Mir Habibullah first traveled by sea to Kandahar and Kabul. The envoy brought expensive gifts and two million rupees for Zaman Shah. Sultan Tipu invited Zaman Shah to come to India with 20,000 cavalry and promised to pay 30 million rupees, in addition to covering all other expenses of the Afghan army (Niazi, 1384).

The rulers of Bahawalpur, Bahawal Khan, and Multan, Muzafar Khan Sadozai, also offered their support. Even the Mughal crown prince, Akbar Shah, invited Zaman Shah to India and promised a substantial financial amount (ibid). Consequently, the British began to take measures to protect their interests and counter his plans (Zadran, 1399).

Napoleon's Diplomatic Proposal to Zaman Shah

Zaman Shah's ambition to occupy India is evident from his response to Napoleon's proposal. Napoleon had devised a plan for 70,000 Russian and French troops to attack India through Iran and Afghanistan. To discuss the execution of this plan and taking the Zaman Shah's support, Napoleon Bonaparte's envoy arrived in Kabul. Although the envoy presented the scheme, Afghanistan at that time possessed a strong army of 150,000 troops, and Zaman Shah had already intended to liberate India from British control on his own initiative (Ghobar, 1346)

Suppression of Humayoun and Mahmoud

In the first year of his reign, Zaman Shah suppressed the rebellion of Humayoun in Kandahar, forcing him to flee to

Baluchistan (Ghobar, 1346). Afterwards, Zaman Shah marched to Herat to bring Mahmoud, who had also been disobedient like Humayoun, under control. Upon learning of Humayoun escape to Baluchistan, Mahmoud submitted to Zaman Shah's authority. Zaman Shah accepted his submission and once again granted the administration of Herat to Humayoun (Farhang, 1371).

First Military Expedition of Zaman Shah towards India

After stabilizing the situation at home, Zaman Shah started his first expedition towards Punjab, and entered Peshawar in December 1793 A.D. (Ghobar, 1346). However, he soon returned to Kandahar due to a renewed rebellion by Humayoun, but he fled without engaging in conflict but was later captured, blinded, and imprisoned (Zafar Kaka Khil, 1999).

Following the suppression of Humayoun rebellion, Zaman Shah advanced to Talpori in 1794 A.D., where the local governor, Fath Ali, also rebelled. Before any measures could be fully implemented there, Mahmoud began opposing Zaman Shah once again in Herat. The Talpori issue unresolved, Zaman Shah returned to Kandahar. Eventually, Fath Ali agreed to pay 300,000 rupees annually in taxes to the Afghan treasury. Zaman Shah accepted this and entrusted the governance of Sindh to Fath Ali. Meanwhile, Mahmoud advanced from Herat to attack Kandahar. The two armies clashed between Grishk and Zamendawer, and after fifteen hours of fighting, Mahmoud escaped with a force of 100 cavalry to Farah and then to Herat. Zaman Shah pursued him and surrounded Herat. Mahmoud feigned once more, and for political expediency, Zaman Shah accepted his obedience and reinstated him as the governor of Herat (Ghobar, 1346).

The insurrection of Mahmoud against Zaman Shah prompted the Uzbeks to raise the banner of rebellion in northern Afghanistan. However, upon hearing of Zaman Shah's successes against Mahmoud, the Amir of Bukhara withdrew from Balkh. Through his representative, he apologized for the attack on Balkh and requested that the border between the two countries be restored to its previous position along the Amu River (Ibid).

Zaman Shah's Expedition towards India and the Qajar Attack on Khorassan

After stabilizing the domestic situation, Zaman Shah announced an expedition towards India. In 1795, he crossed the Indus River with 30,000 troops and established his camp at Hassan Abdal (Ghobar, 1346). From Hassan Abdal, a military detachment was dispatched to seize Rohtas Fort (Rohtas Qala) (Zafar Kaka Khil, 1999). As a result, the Sikhs were defeated and fled to the mountains.

Zaman Shah had spent less than a week in Hassan Abdal when news arrived of the invasion by Agha Muhammad Qajar (Mehsood, n.d.). Agha Muhammad Qajar had killed the Afghan governor of Khorassan, Shahrukh Mirza, and plundered Mashhad. Zaman Shah angered by this action, so immediately moved his army towards Kabul and reached Peshawar on January 3, 1796. Before Zaman Shah could depart from Peshawar, Qajar retreated from Khorassan (Zarmalwal, 1383).

After Qajar's withdrawal, Zaman Shah remained in Peshawar, considering the situation in India to be more pressing than Iran (Ghobar, 1346). The Afghan army entered Lahore on January 3, 1797 (Mehsood, n.d.). During this march from Peshawar to Lahore, all regions were cleared of Sikh forces, and preparations for the advance into India began (Zafar Kaka Khil, 1999).

Shir Muhammad Khan, who commanded 2,000 soldiers, had previously cleared the Sikh forces from the route to Lahore, allowing Zaman Shah to enter the city without facing any obstacles. While in Lahore, Zaman Shah received a letter from Shah Alam, the Mughal emperor of India, inviting him to Delhi, the capital (Ghobar, 1346). Zaman Shah also sent a written notice to the British East India Company, declaring his intention to enter India and drive out the Marathas (Ghobar, 1346).

Zaman Shah did not advance towards Delhi, because his brother Mahmoud rebelled for the third time. Consequently, Zaman Shah diverted his campaign from India to Kandahar. After a confrontation between the two brothers, Mahmoud was defeated and fled with his son, Kamran, to the court of Qajar. Losing trust in his brother, Zaman Shah entrusted the administration of Herat to his own son, Caesar (Mehsood, n.d.).

Compromise with the Sikhs

Capturing India was a primary goal of Zaman Shah. Continuously when he had resolved internal crises, he would plan to advance into India. Following his return from Herat, this time once again, he moved towards India and reached Lahore on October 25, 1798 A.D. There, he reached a compromise with the Sikhs for the first time. The majority of Sikh leaders, including Ranjit Singh, came to Zaman Shah (Mehsood, n.d.). Even those Sikhs who had been consistently rebellious, now pledged to obey him.

Zaman Shah believed that his advance into India should be secured from the rear in Punjab. Therefore, he appointed Ranjit Singh as the governor of Punjab and Lahore. Ranjit Singh quickly organized scattered forces and, in the process, drew the attention of the British towards himself (Ghobar, 1346)

The British Fear of Zaman Shah

At this time, the British were genuinely concerned about Zaman Shah (Ghobar, 1346). This fear is reflected in the words of Malcolm: "…the world-conquering potential of Zaman Shah is particularly remarkable. Without disunity in his country, nothing can prevent him from achieving it. I consider the King of Afghanistan, Zaman Shah Durrani, one of the strongest enemies of British power in Hindustan. His animosity, even without external support, could escalate, and at the first opportunity, with all resources and instruments at his disposal, he could attack India." (Wakili, 1337). The British feared that Zaman Shah might conquer India in the same manner as his grandfather, Ahmad Shah Durrani (Mehsood, n.d.).

The East India Company dispatched the spy Ghulam Sarwar to Kandahar to gather information on Afghanistan's financial situation, revenue, and military fortifications. Ghulam Sarwar eventually completed his report and sold it to the East India Company for 4,500 rupees (Sistani, 2023).

There is no doubt that the British were unaware of Zaman Shah's exact plans to conquer India. However, the report prepared by Ghulam Sarwar may have provided them with better information, revealing that Zaman Shah possessed sufficient financial and military resources for such a campaign. This assessment was accurate: at that time, the royal treasury held 10 million gold coins (each equivalent to 15 Indian rupees) and 40 million silver coins, and the army was adequately strong. Since the British could not confront Zaman Shah in direct combat and were unable to conduct defensive operations against him (Niazi, 1384), they sought to occupy him elsewhere, preventing him from finding the time and opportunity to attack India (Mehsood, n.d.)

The Beginning of British Programs against Zaman Shah

For Britain, Afghanistan, particularly Herat, the Persian court, and the presence of Mahmoud there, were very important. The British strategy was to use Mahmoud and Iran to launch occasional attacks on Herat, thereby preventing Zaman Shah from advancing toward India (Niazi, 1384). To achieve this goal, Mahdi Ali Khan, an East India Company agent in Iran, sought to persuade the Persian government to destabilize Zaman Shah and keep him preoccupied within Afghanistan. As a result he would not find an opportunity to attack India for three years (Ghobar, 1346).

In addition, the British instructed the governor-general of Bombay, Jonathan Duncan, to encourage both the Ottoman government and Britain's ambassador in Constantinople, Mr. Manistee, to influence Iran to launch an attack on Afghanistan.

The aim was to create internal difficulties for Zaman Shah, so that he would remain occupied in his homeland and be unable to move against India (Niazi, 1384)

The easiest and most cost-effective way for Britain to confront Zaman Shah, was by establishing the political relations with Iran and then using them against Afghanistan. Britain sought to disturb the Afghan king by encouraging Iran to launch attacks on Afghanistan. For this purpose, Mahdi Ali Khan, the agent of the East India Company, was assigned to provoke the Qajar court against Zaman Shah. Mahdi Ali Khan found access to the court of Fath Ali Shah Qajar. Mahdi Ali Khan said to Fath Ali Shah Qajar: "Zaman Shah, who is in Lahore, is persecuting the Shiites of the region. Thousands of Shiites have forced as refugees in the territories of the East India Company due to his cruelty. (At that time, India was consisted of various small and large states, which Britain exploited for its objectives by setting them against one another). If the king of Iran attacks the Afghans, he will gain great reward. To accomplish this, it is better to dispatch Mahmoud, who has taken refuge in Iran, with a supporting force to defeat his brother Zaman Shah and put an end to the oppression of the Shiites" (Farhang, 1371).

In this mission entrusted to Mahdi Ali khan two jobs. The first was that, the threats arise on Afghanistan's western borders by Iran, and the second to prevent influence of French in Iran. Mahdi Ali Khan has done his job successfully. The (E.I.C) was giving in a year 200000 - 300000 Rs to Mahdi Ali Khan to expense it for attack of Iran against Afghanistan but, when he percept about the state of new Qajar king, so he hid his original purpose and appeared that come for congratulation, because Mahdi has knew that without any expenses he can to provoke Iran against Afghanistan (Sistani, 2023).

Through Mahdi Ali Khan, Britain pursued two strategies:

1. British maintained its interests by encouraging Iran to create disturbances for Zaman Shah in the province of Khorassan.
2. Iran accepted the British Great ambassador in Tehran for a formal agreement (Farhang, 1371).

As mentioned above, Zaman Shah was busy with preparations for his campaign into India. Since Britain could not directly oppose his potential attack, they provoked Fath Ali Shah Qajar to invade Khorassan, which he ultimately did. Upon hearing of Qajar's invasion, Zaman Shah halted his plans for India and swiftly moved to Kabul, reaching Peshawar in 1799 A.D. (Zafar Kaka Khil, 1999)

This movement by the Qajar was merely a political maneuver and brought no real benefit to the Persians. Fath Ali Shah Qajar advanced only up to Sabzvar and Nishapur but soon returned. However, this action fulfilled the expectations of the British in India (Attaullah Khan, 1356). Before to begin the rainy season in India, and the full rivers could create an obstacles for Zaman Shah, he was compelled to return to Afghanistan in order to suppress the Qajar attack. Consequently, his plans for India were delayed once again (Ghobar, 1346).

At the Persian court, preparations had already been made through Mahdi Ali Khan. Consequently, the governor-general of India, Wellesley, dispatched Sir John Malcolm to the Persian court with three to four thousand rupees to be used as a bribe to encourage Iran to attack Afghanistan in August 1799 A.D. Malcolm executed his mission successfully.

In his report to the authorities of the East India Company, Malcolm wrote: "If the Durrani king attacks India, the king of Iran will certainly attack Afghanistan" (Niazi, 1384). He further added: "Be assured that before the rainy season of 1801 A.D., Zaman Shah will be unable to act in India. He will have no opportunity for this attack, even if he possesses the means. By the grace of Allah, he will remain occupied for many years in these regions and will not be able to focus on other matters" (Attaullah Khan, 1356).

The Exchange of Letters between the Afghan and Persian Sides

The newly appointed British ambassador, Sir John Malcolm, wrote to the East India Company (E.I.C) regarding the exchange of letters between the Afghan and Persian sides (Farhang, 1371). He reported: "Before the Shah of Qajar advanced towards Khorassan, Mashhad, and Nishapur (which at that time were parts of the Afghan Empire), he instructed his minister, Haji Ibrahim, to write and send a letter to Zaman Shah's prime minister, Wafadar Khan (Rahmatullah Khan). In the letter, to note it, that would be better to prevent the flames of conflict through an arrangement consistent with justice, and mention that the Shah of Qajar had undertaken the support of Mahmoud, the elder brother of Zaman Shah, based on the principles of manners and nobility. The Shah did not aspire to raise him to the emirate of Afghanistan but would be satisfied if Herat and its dependencies were left to Mahmoud." In response, the Afghan prime minister Rahmatullah Khan wrote: "The pretext for war by the King of Iran has been provoked by the intrigues and corruption of the irreligious British. If, during the past two years, Zaman Shah had not been restrained from advancing from this side (Persia), their colony in India would by now have been half destroyed." Haji Ibrahim replied: "Even if the friendship between the King of Iran and Britain is considered one of the factors behind his actions, the wise and opinionated people know that, in political affairs, considerations of sect should play only a minor role" (Niazi, 1384).

To create further difficulties for Zaman Shah and keep him preoccupied on all fronts, Britain dispatched an agent, Nathan Crowe, to the Talpori family in Sindh. His mission was twofold: on the one hand, to monitor the movements of Zaman Shah, and on the other, to incite Zaman Shah's allies in Sindh against him by offering support. Initially, the Amir of Sindh, Fath Ali Khan, came under British influence and permitted them to establish factories in Sindh. However, Zaman Shah opposed this move and, at his request, Nathan Crowe and his associates were expelled from Sindh (Niazi, 1384).

The Coup Strategy against Zaman Shah

Zaman Shah's continuous efforts and ambitions towards India caused considerable concern for the British, who therefore carried out various measures to create obstacles for him and delay his military campaigns. One of these schemes was a coup. Muhammad Ibrahim Atayee has written on this matter: "…it was a movement resembling a coup. During this movement, a plan was devised and implemented; however, the negative aspect was that a foreign element was involved in instructor council, to the perception that, it was the first movement in which a foreign hand had intervened" (Atayee, 1383).

In this discussion, we omit the internal causes of the coup and focus solely on the foreign involvement. The year 1799 A.D. was particularly challenging for Zaman Shah compared to previous years. On one hand, the British appointed an agent of the East India Company (E.I.C) to incite Fath Ali Shah against Zaman Shah. On the other hand, in 1799 A.D., Mia Ghulam Muhammad arrived from India to Kandahar. He gathered a large following, including tribal leaders. Some sources suggest that the coup was planned at this meeting place (Langar). Historians identify thirteen key members involved in the coup, including Mia Ghulam Muhammad Hindi and the influential leader Paynda Muhammad Khan Barikzai. This group swore an oath on the following matters.

1. Zaman Shah should be removed from the throne, and Shah Shujah should be installed as king.
2. In the future, the selection of the king should be made with the consultation and advice of the tribal leaders.
3. If a king fails to act according to the demands of the tribes, the Sardars (tribal leaders) shall have the authority to depose him.

Some historians argue that the coup group had planned to assassinate Zaman Shah and install Mahmoud as king. However, Prime Minister Wafadar Khan (Rahmatullah Khan) informed Zaman Shah of the conspiracy and, before the plot could be executed, arrested all those involved. Mia Ghulam Muhammad Hindi escaped to India but was eventually captured and executed along with other tribal leaders. Regarding the foreign involvement in the coup, Atayee notes: "Until now, I have not seen any document indicating that Mia Ghulam Muhammad received instructions, reports, or invitations from external sources. Nevertheless, this does not negate the logical mind, how Mia Ghulam Muhammad Hindi was able to reach Kandahar at such a sensitive time and gather tribal leaders to incite opposition against the king" (Ibid). Following this event, Zaman Shah faced increasing internal problems throughout the country

The British-Persian Defensive Agreement against Zaman Shah

As mentioned, when Zaman Shah began a military campaign towards India, Iran, following British instigation, attacked Afghan territories. Consequently, Zaman Shah was unable to advance even halfway before being, forced to return due to Persian intervention. At this time, Britain sought to formalize its influence in the region by signing an agreement with Persia. At the conclusion signed the Defensive Treaty of Tehran between Persia and Britain in 1801 A.D. The main articles of this agreement are outlined below:

1: If the King of Afghanistan intends to attack British India, the King of Iran shall dispatch a strong army to destroy the Afghan forces.

2: If the King of Afghanistan seeks friendship with the King of Iran, the King of Iran shall pledge that he will not attack India.

3: If the King of Afghanistan, or any French person, intends to attack Iran, the mister of British shall provide weapons, other military supplies, and experienced military officers to a nearby harbor in support of the King of Iran.

4: If the French attempt to land on the coastal islands of Iran, both Iranian and British forces shall jointly prevent them.

5: In the event of a war between the King of Iran and Afghanistan, the British government shall not interfere unless requested to mediate by both sides.

Signed on January 1, 1801

Signatories: Sir John Malcolm – Haji Ibrahim (Habibi, 1380)

The Clarifications of John Malcolm to the Governor-General of India

Regarding the political agreement with Iran, John Malcolm wrote several clarifications in a letter to the Governor-General of India. A key point of this agreement was that, no one of the contracting countries would assist the enemy of the other. If Zaman Shah attacks India, the King of Iran would launch an attack on Afghanistan's western frontiers. Also, if the King of Iran sought friendship with Zaman Shah, he would take a promise from him not to invade India. when Zaman Shah fail to respect these conditions, the King of Iran would march his army against Afghanistan. Malcolm further added: "As I informed you in my letter of August 10, no action by Zaman Shah toward India can be tolerated. I must once again assure you that in the current year, and even in 1802 A.D., no threat from Afghanistan to India can be expected" (Jalali, 1347)

Malcolm presented clarifications to the Governor-General regarding Zaman Shah's escaped brother, Mahmoud. Mahmoud moved from Khorassan and its reported that he had captured Kandahar city along with its surrounding fortresses. A few tribal leaders who were dissatisfied with Zaman Shah joined Mahmoud, and they were preparing for battle in the following year. Therefore, before the arrival of spring, Zaman Shah's progress was impossible because the highway between Kabul and Kandahar remained closed to transportation throughout the winter. Moreover, the Qajar King assured that the Iranian army would march toward Khorassan in April. In this situation, it was clear that Zaman Shah would not have the opportunity to launch a campaign before September or October and would have not to return to Kabul. Consequently, in 1801, Zaman Shah required considerable time to prepare for an attack on India. Malcolm wrote to the East India Company on behalf of Iran: "As long as the state of Iran remains intact, Zaman Shah's hostile attacks against India will be prevented" (Wakili, 1337).

Conclusion

Zaman Shah was highly interested in India and sought to conquer the region, following in the footsteps of his grandfather. To achieve this goal, he led his army toward India several times; however, each campaign ended prematurely without any positive results due to internal problems.

Before fully restoring the internal situation, Zaman Shah's continuous and unceasing attempts to attack India were a significant mistake. After the first and second campaigns, he should have first stabilized the internal affairs of the country and addressed the threat from Iran before attempting to march toward India. This plan was feasible because Zaman Shah commanded a powerful and well-organized military force. He could have more effectively and easily neutralized the ongoing threats and interventions of Iran, which were provoked by the British.

He could have taken advantage of the confused situation in India, the animosity of regional rulers toward Britain, and his own strong desire to move toward India. Reviewing the correspondence of Wafadar Khan with the Persian court displaying that they were aware of Britain's conspiracy. However, regrettably, in pursuit of his ambitions and goals, Zaman Shah acted hastily. Before fully addressing all internal opposition and threats from the western neighbor, he repeatedly attempted to march toward India.

Finally, all the efforts of Britain proved successful against Zaman Shah. He was unable, throughout of his all reign, to find the opportunity to conquer India due to internal challenges posed by his brothers and the actions of the Qajar government. Britain implemented, at minimal cost and with considerable efficiency, their strategy of "foster disunity and manipulate politics." As a result, Zaman Shah could neither protect himself, nor the Afghan government from British conspiracies, leaving his ambitions unfulfilled.

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